



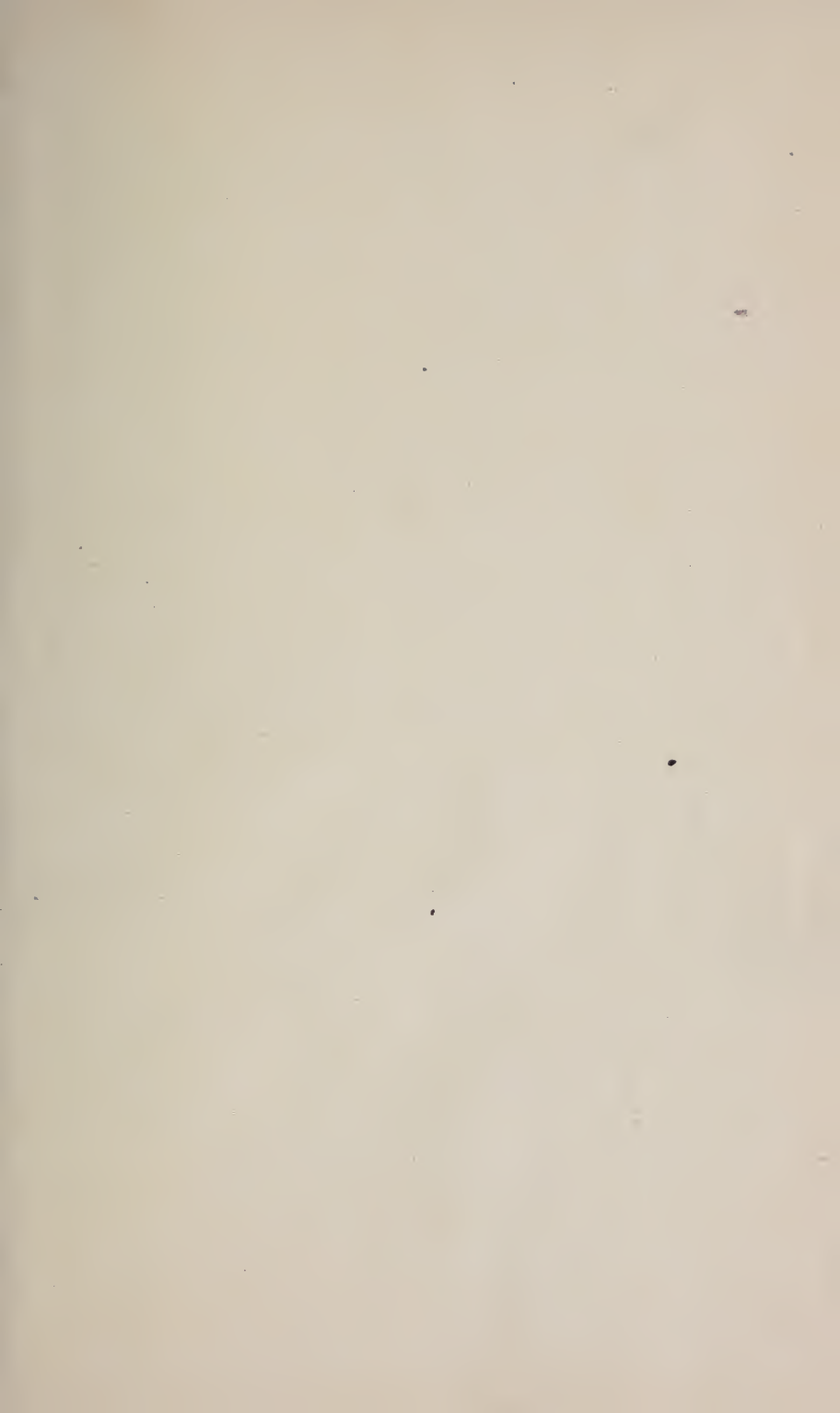
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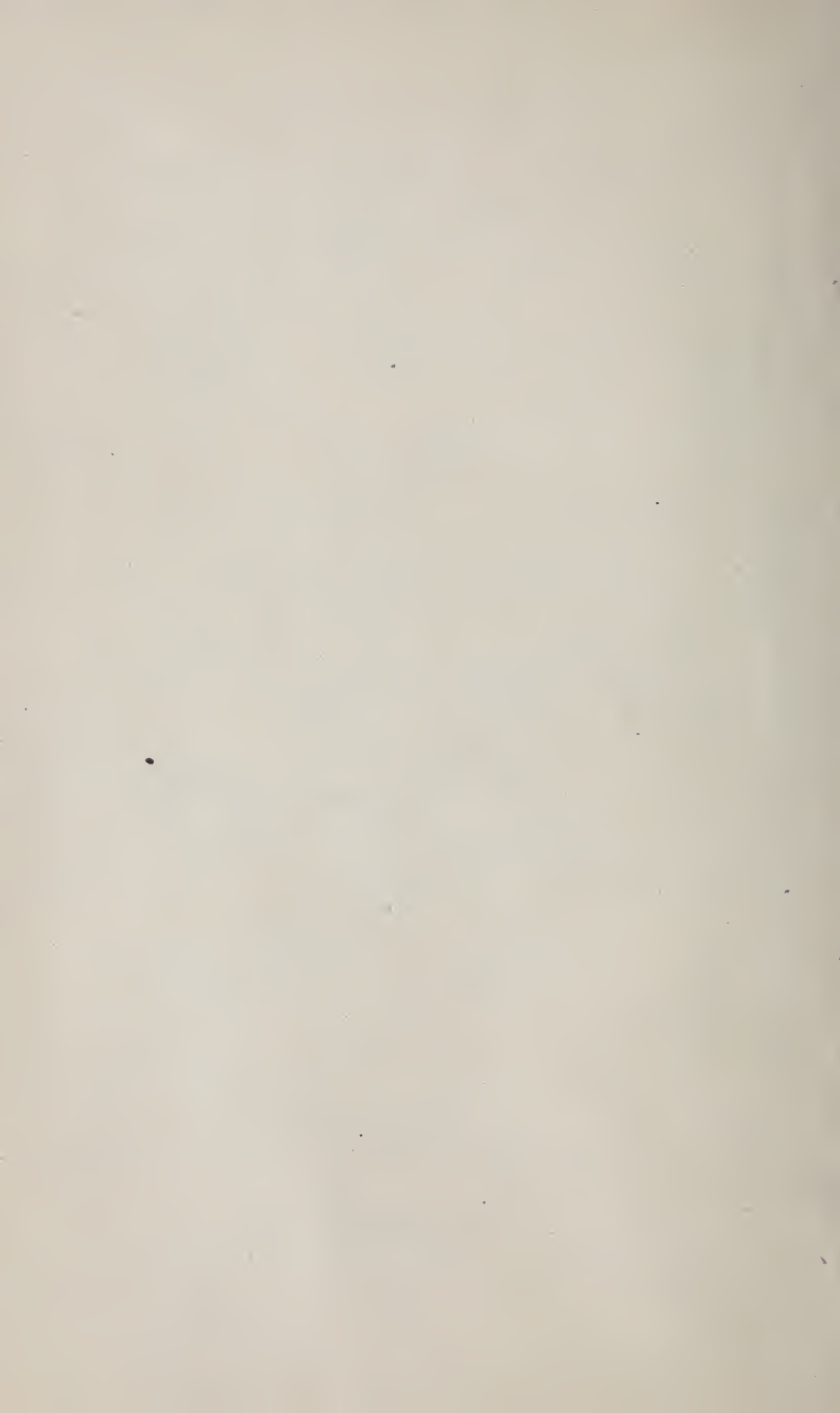
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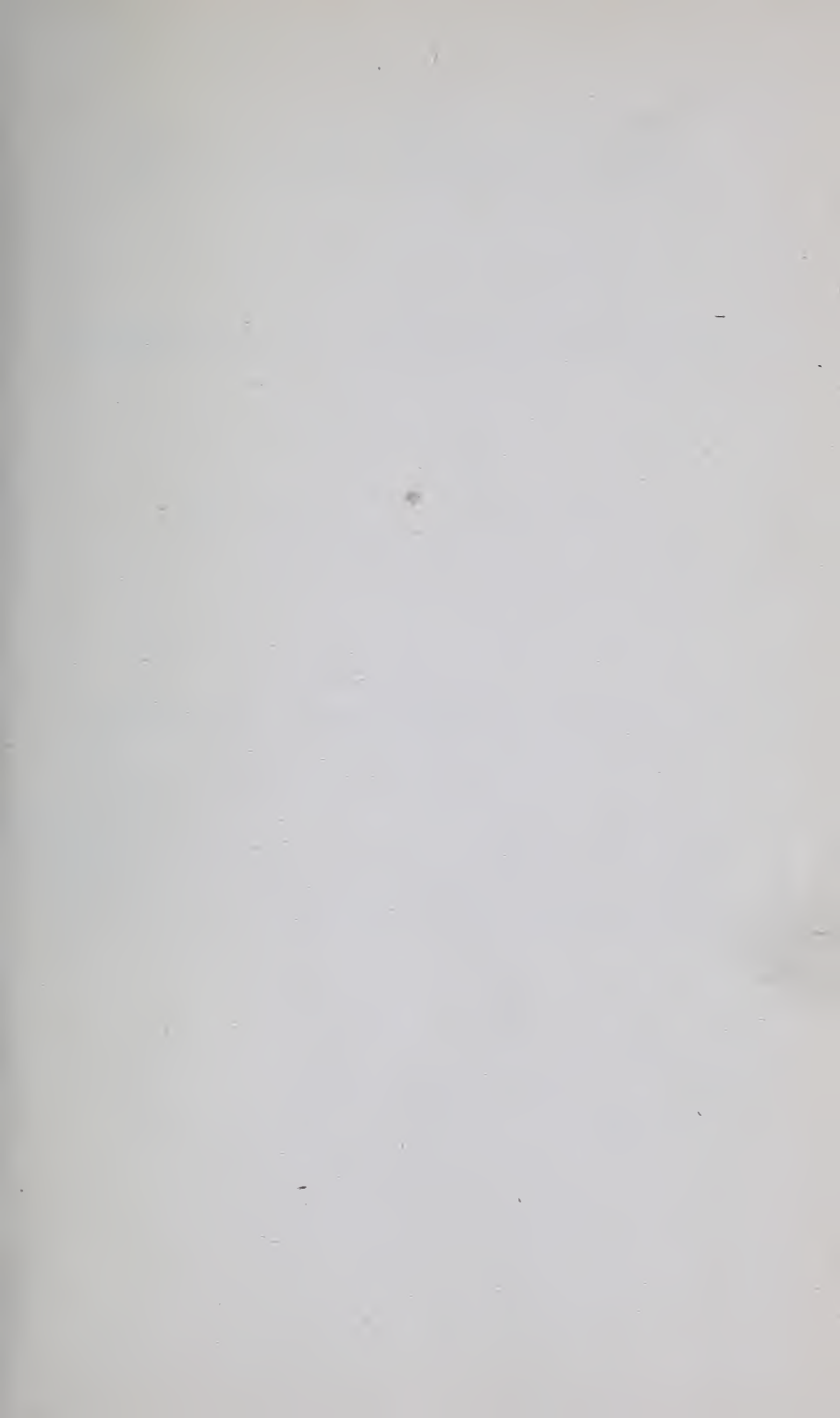
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA











# INFANT BAPTISM

## BRIEFLY CONSIDERED.

✓  
BY REV. N. DOANE,  
OF THE OREGON CONFERENCE.

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Infants, according to the usage of the Church, are baptized. . . . The Church received from the apostles an order to give baptism to infants.—*Origen*.

The grace of God [in baptism] is to be denied to no person that is born. —*Cyprian*.

The custom of our mother, the Church, in baptizing infants, is by no means to be disregarded. . . . For my part I do not remember that I ever heard any other thing from any Christian . . . that I ever read otherwise of any writer that I could ever find treating of these matters.—*Augustine*.

Men do slander me, as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants. I never heard even an impious heretic who could affirm this concerning infants.—*Pelagius*.

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## P R E F A C E .

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I N these days of Evangelical Alliances and cultivated catholicity among the different bodies of Christians, it may seem to some an intrusion to attempt the discussion of a theme which bears the least aspect of controversy. It may be regarded as unfraternal to call attention, even, to a disputed *doctrine*, the vindication of which may possibly interrupt the flow of the oily waters of peace.

But the time should never be when the pious may feel themselves at liberty to yield their conscientious convictions, even for the sake of harmony ; nor should the time ever come, when a close and careful examination of candid differences of opinion among the friends of Jesus may not be submitted to—provided it be conducted under the influence of Christian charity—though they differ widely and radically in their views of truth and duty.

It is from a conviction of the verity of this latter statement that this little volume has been

written ; and the endeavor has been to satisfy the minds of those who are ready to inquire, “ *What valid reasons are there for Infant Baptism?*” or, “ *Has the practice of baptizing infants the authority and sanction of the Sacred Scriptures?*”

To answer these interrogatories in a plain way, with *facts, arguments, testimony, and Scripture*, to the satisfaction of the candid inquirer after the truth, and to the comprehension of the illiterate as well as of the learned who may read these pages, has been the purpose of the writer in penning them. Whether he has been entirely successful in the purpose will be determined by those who will give the book an attentive perusal. If it shall appear that the effort has been of service in rescuing any from the toils of doubt and difficulty in regard to their baptism in infancy, and in settling the minds of any who have been fickle and wavering in their convictions respecting the divine authority for the practice, the writer will feel the satisfaction which those only can enjoy who have labored for so noble a purpose. N. D.

EAST PORTLAND, OREGON, *December 21, 1874.*

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# INFANT BAPTISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

THE builder, before laying the foundation for the structure he may be about to raise, removes first the rubbish that he may not be encumbered with it in the prosecution of his purpose. Before presenting any argument in vindication of the practice of the Church in giving baptism to infants, it will be necessary to answer sundry *objections* which are frequently and freely urged against the practice, otherwise the mind of the reader, beset by these, will fail to estimate the force of the evidence upon the subject.

I. It is objected, "There is no *Scripture precept—no express command*—for baptizing infants ; therefore the authority upon which they are baptized is not that of the Scriptures."

In answering the objection, it is admitted that there is in the Scriptures no plain, positive command, in so many words, to give the ordinance to infants ; but the inference of “no Scripture authority,” which the objector has drawn from the premises, *does not follow*.

It would be gratifying to be furnished and fortified with a “thus saith the Lord,” for all that we believe, teach, and practice ; but in the absence of “express command,” *legitimate inference*, founded upon obvious warrant of Scripture, may indicate the will of God as unmistakably as it is possible for express precept to do it.

No Church waits for express *command* in all matters of faith or practice ; but all classes of Christians proceed upon evidence merely *inferential*, in matters as important as the administration of the sacraments. We have, for example, nothing like express command for giving either Christian baptism or the Lord’s supper to *females*, and yet no Church withholds these ordinances from this class of its membership. The Church, therefore, that would withhold baptism from infants for want of “express command,” would for the same reason, to be consistent, withhold both the sacraments from its female members.

II. "It can do no *good*; what *good* can it do to sprinkle a little water upon the head or in the face of an unconscious babe?"

It might as properly be asked "what good will it do" to baptize any person in any manner? It is not our business to ask "what good," or how much or how "little *good*," it will do to administer baptism to any. We are not required to baptize on the ground that we can estimate the good that may come of it, either directly or indirectly. It is sufficient to believe it to be the *will of God*; and upon this ground, and no other, can we be justified in giving the ordinance either to infants or adults, or in withholding it from either. There can be no doubt as to the benefit or usefulness of the divine institutions, but our opinion of their utility is not the *ground* on which we are either to receive or administer them. Abraham might not have been able to pronounce upon the *good* of circumcising his sons, but he did well in complying with what he believed to be the Divine will in placing the sign of the covenant upon them.

III. "Infant baptism takes away the *liberty of the child*."

Mr. Woolsey, Baptist, author of a treatise on baptism, says: "Infant baptism deprives the

subject of the rights of private judgment." He descants like a patriot upon the "noble and evangelical sentiments of the framers of the Declaration of American Independence, 'That men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, *liberty*,' " etc. He talks of "our parents" having not the right to *take "advantage of our infancy,"* etc.

The whole thing looks like making a man of straw to shoot at. The "liberty of the child," the "rights of private judgment," and the "inalienable rights of liberty," are phrases which, in their proper connection, indicate an endowment of which none may deprive us without injustice; but in the connection in which Mr. Woolsey has placed them they must mean either, first, "The liberty" of choosing between baptism and *no* baptism, which is really choosing between religion and *no* religion, in which case the objection would be equally against *all* religious teaching of the youthful mind, as the tendency of such teaching is to bias and prepossess it in favor of religion, to which no Christian could object; or, second, it must mean "The liberty" of choosing between *different modes of baptism*.

Now, it is a significant fact, that no class of Christians objects to infant baptism (unless it be the Quakers) but those who baptize exclusively by immersion; and *they*, of all people, should be the very last to declaim about the injustice of "depriving the subject of the rights of private judgment" in the matter of baptism. Do they allow the subject or candidate the right of private judgment in choosing a mode of baptism? Far from it! The objection comes with ill grace from such a quarter. The truth is, we may as well object to the parent proposing to instruct, or in any way endeavoring to pre-engage, the faith and affection of the child in favor of any particular system of religious teaching or doctrine, as to object to its baptism. But that it is the duty of all Christian parents to instruct their children, and to train them up, in accordance with their own views of religion, no one will deny, and none are more tenacious of the right than those who urge the objection under consideration.

IV. "Many persons baptized in infancy are *dissatisfied* with their infant baptism; it should therefore *be dispensed with*."

No; *few* persons, comparatively, are dissatisfied with their infant baptism. The great ma-

jority are entirely satisfied with it, as is evident from the fact, in the great majority of the most populous Churches, that the number of infants annually baptized is constantly *increasing*. The Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1865, baptized 32,891 infants. There was a uniform increase up to 1871, when the number baptized was 54,517, *an aggregate increase in six years of 21,626*. Since 1869 the number baptized each year is considerably in excess of 50,000. This is probably a fair *sample* of the increase in American Pedobaptist Churches. These facts do not indicate much "dissatisfaction" with the practice. It is presumed that *none* would be dissatisfied if they were properly instructed, unless their minds were perplexed and perverted by the selfish intermeddling of proselyters. Efforts have not been wanting in some communities to disturb the minds of some by the suggestion: "In case you are *not satisfied* with your *infant baptism*, you *can be baptized again*."

No practice of the Church has, in these modern days, met with fiercer opposition from certain classes of professed Christians than that of infant baptism, and the reason is obvious. Unless the baptized in infancy can be disturbed in their belief of the evangelical character of the



ordinance thus administered, they *can never be proselyted*.

V. "*Faith* is required in order to *baptism*, (Mark xvi, 16,) 'He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved ;' but *infants* cannot *exercise faith* ; they should not, therefore, be baptized."

*Faith*, in order to baptism, is required of *adults* only. The impropriety and injustice of applying the rule (requiring faith in order to baptism) to infants, is seen in the fact that if it be thus applied it would as surely debar them from *salvation* as from baptism ; because it is said, " He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

We do not believe that infants should not be *saved* because they cannot believe ; why should we believe that infants should not be *baptized* because they cannot believe ? Can a Baptist give an answer to this objection, on the ground of the above question ? If (in the light of Mark xvi, 16) not believing be no barrier to an infant's being *saved* ; then, in the light of the same Scriptures, why should not believing be a barrier to an infant's being *baptized* ? " It's a poor rule that wont work both ways." " That which proves too much, proves nothing."

The presentation of the last objection has opened a mine of truth which it were well not to abandon in haste. Why do Baptists give the ordinance to adults? Is it because they *believe*, or because, believing, they are *regenerated*? Is it because they use the *means* to the end—salvation—or because they have reached and *realized* the end? Is it not because they have received “the end of” their “faith, even the *salvation of*” their “souls?” It is, undoubtedly. The Baptists give the ordinance to no one unless he professes an “experience” which is deemed a satisfactory evidence of conversion.

Let it be remembered, then, that the Baptist “believer” is not baptized because he *believes*, but because he is *justified* and *regenerated*, as the result of his faith. So the *Lutherans*, *Presbyterians*, *Orthodox Congregationalists*, and *Methodists* hold that baptism symbolizes not the *means* of salvation, whatever it be, but *salvation itself*. “Baptism is . . . a sign of *regeneration*, or the *new birth*,” says the Methodist Discipline. Art. xvii. Wesley’s teaching, received by all denominations of Methodists, is, that it is “the outward sign of an inward grace.” But Arminian theology, as taught by Wesley, Fletcher, Fisk, Hibbard, Whedon, and others, regards all



infants as being in a *justified* and *regenerated state*. In a note in "Fletcher's Checks," vol. i, p. 461, he says: "Those who start at every expression they are not used to, will ask if our Church admits the justification of infants. I answer: Undoubtedly, since her clergy, by her direction, say over myriads of infants, 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it has pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thy own child,' etc. And in her Catechism she teaches all children to say, as soon as they can speak, 'I heartily thank our heavenly Father that he hath called me to this state of salvation.'" He then proceeds to show that this infant justification and regeneration are universal. Mr. Wesley, commenting on the Saviour's words, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," argues that children have a right to membership in the regenerate Church on earth, which is "the kingdom of heaven," because of their regenerate condition.

Dr. Fisk's views, as quoted in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" for January, 1873, are as follows: "Although all moral depravity, derived or contracted, is damning in its nature; still,

by virtue of the atonement, the destructive effects of derived depravity are counteracted ; and the guilt is not imputed until, by a voluntary rejection of the Gospel remedy, man makes the depravity of his nature the object of his own choice. Hence, although, abstractly considered, this depravity is destructive to the possessors, *yet through the grace of the Gospel all are born free from condemnation.* So the Apostle Paul : “ As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”—*Calvinistic Controversy.*

Dr. Hibbard is well known to the Church as a decided and firm advocate of the doctrines of *infant justification and regeneration* ; and Whedon says : “ We believe it clear that Dr. Hibbard’s view ” (of the infant condition) “ *is about the view of the Church*, if her formulas are to decide the question.”

Dr. Whedon’s views are set forth in the following words : “ No one affirms that the regeneration of an infant, as taught by Fletcher, is psychologically absurd, or contrary to human or Christian consciousness. *The doctrine of infant regeneration, either unconditional or conditional upon*

*baptism, is no new doctrine, but has been a dogma in all the great sections of the Church, whether Greek, Roman, or Protestant. . . .* The regeneration of the infant is nothing different in nature from that of the adult, except as modified by its subject ; and the use of *the term* is in both cases equally proper, involving no innovation in theology of either thought or language. If an infant can be depraved it can also be undepraved ; *if it can be positively unregenerate it can also be regenerate.* In the infant nature as truly as in the adult there may exist all the potencies, predispositions, and predeterminate tendencies, natural or gracious, for an actual though not responsible moral nature, good or bad. The doctrine of depravity is neither invalidated in nor modified by the doctrine of infant regeneration, whether unconditional or conditioned upon birth, baptism, or death, actual or approaching. In either case the depravity comes from Adam, is by nature, and is equally complete ; and in either case, regeneration comes from Christ and is by grace, being extra to and above nature. The unborn John the Baptist was to be ‘filled with the Holy Ghost,’ (Luke i, 15,) and ‘leaped’ (verse 41) at the approach of the mother of the unborn Saviour. The unborn

Jesus was 'that holy thing.' And such cases at once explode the objection of the 'manifest absurdity' of 'regeneration between conception and birth.' And this would seem to finish, too, all the argument about the absurdity of generation and regeneration being simultaneous."

Clearly, then, it is a doctrine of the Methodist Episcopal Church, *that infants graciously occupy the relation of the justified, and inherit the condition of the regenerate; and all the great sections of the Church, whether Greek, Roman, or Protestant—either unconditional or conditioned upon baptism—hold the same doctrine.\**

If, therefore, the Baptists administer baptism to the subject because he is *regenerated*, should they object to others administering it when the *subject is in the same state?*

\*I have dwelt longer and been more particular on infant justification and regeneration than may to some appear needful, not only because it is demanded by the argument, but also because some of our oldest and best theologians, for holding this doctrine, have been accounted heretical.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CHURCH—ITS ORGANIZATION.

IT will probably be admitted by all parties, that in the Christian dispensation all who have a right to membership in the Church of God, and no others, ought to receive baptism ; for, whatever other purposes baptism may serve, it is undoubtedly to be regarded as the initiatory rite into the visible Church. In order, therefore, to determine what characters are entitled to baptism, according to the law of God, it will be necessary to inquire what characters have a right to a place in the Church. In order to determine this latter question we must refer back to its original organization. It is when the organization is first effected, in all organized bodies or societies of men, that the terms or conditions of membership are most fully specified.

Before we proceed further, it may be proper to define what we are to understand by the *Church*. By the *invisible Church*, is meant *all God's people*. "By the word *Church*," says

Richard Watson, "we are to understand the whole body of God's true people, in every period of time: this is the invisible or spiritual Church."

The *visible* Church may be briefly defined, *any body of people separated from the world for the service of God, with divinely appointed ordinances and rites of initiation.* The Nineteenth Article of the Church of England defines it, "A congregation of faithful men, in which the true word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinances, in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

But *when*, and *where*, and *with whom* was the visible Church *organized*? For more than twenty centuries the people of God wore no distinguishing badge or outward mark by which they were known to be separated from the world and recognized as God's people; they were known only by Him who "looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart," unless, indeed, their character and peculiar heirship were discerned by the "fruits of righteousness" which they bore. To these people God made promises from time to time, which, faintly at first, but afterward more and more



plainly, shadowed forth the coming and character of the Messiah, and the fuller light and influence of the divine Spirit upon the world. Early, however, in the history of the post-diluvian nations, God appeared unto Abram, a resident of "Ur of the Chaldees," for the purpose of bringing him and his family into more intimate and visible covenant relation with himself; separating him from his own kindred and nation, and unfolding more fully to him the covenant of grace, which "in the fullness of times," was to be ratified by the blood of Christ; and placing upon the person of Abram, (whose name was now changed to Abraham, as more expressive of his heirship of the world by virtue of his covenant obligation,) and each of his male descendants, an outward and visible token or mark of the covenant into which, as a party, they were now entering. Hence we read of the Lord's saying unto Abram, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall *all families of the earth be blessed.*" Gen. xii, 2, 3. And again, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward,

and westward : for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth : so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Gen. xiii, 14-16. And again, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them : and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord ; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. xv, 5, 6. And again, "I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect. . . . And God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham ; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an ever-



lasting possession ; and I will *be their God*. Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee ; *Every man child among you shall be circumcised*. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin ; and it shall be a *token of the covenant* between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised : and *my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant*. And the uncircumcised man *child* whose flesh . . . is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; *he hath broken my covenant*." Gen. xvii, 1-14. And again, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies : and *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*." Gen. xxii, 17, 18. And again, to Isaac, "I will perform the oath which I sware

unto Abraham thy father ; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries ; and *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" Gen. xxvi, 3, 4. And again, to Jacob, "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth ; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south : and in *thee* and *in thy seed* shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxviii, 14.

This certainly was a remarkable transaction ; and it must have marked an epoch in the history of mankind. Nothing like this had ever transpired between the divine Being and any of the members of the human family, so far as the inspired records show, anterior to the event of God's appearing to Abram for the purpose of making this covenant with him and his family.

Here, then, we have the *original organization of the visible Church of God*—a people separated from the world for the service of God, wearing a badge of distinction, an ordinance of divine appointment, a "token of the covenant" into which they had entered with Him. How well does this view of the case accord with the following from Mr. Watson, (*Dic.*, p. 241 :) "Prior to the days of Abraham, this" (the invisible)

“Church, though scattered up and down the world, and subject to many changes in its worship through the addition of new revelations, was still but one and the same, because founded in the same covenant,” (the promise of the Messiah given to Adam, which contained in it something of the nature of a covenant,) “and interested thereby in all the benefits or privileges that God has granted, or would at any time grant. In process of time, God was pleased to restrict his Church, as far as visible acknowledgment went, in a great measure, to the seed of Abraham. With the latter he renewed his covenant, requiring that he should walk before him and be upright. He also constituted him the father of the faithful, or of all them that believe, and the ‘heir of the world.’ So that since the days of Abraham the Church has, in every age, been founded upon the covenant made with that patriarch, and on the work of redemption which was to be performed according to that covenant. Now wheresoever this covenant made with Abraham is, and with whomsoever it is established, with them is the Church of God, and to them all the promises and privileges of the Church really belong.”

I am aware that many who reject infant bap-

tism stoutly *deny* that God organized a *Church* with Abraham, and affirm that the "covenant," the token of which was circumcision, did not confirm either to Abraham or to his posterity any inheritance of a spiritual character. They tell us that Jewish children receiving circumcision received no advantage thereby, except those which were purely political. Thus they make the whole transaction a splendid political affair; as though the divine Being had no higher object in view than to make the natural posterity of Abraham a grand national success!

On the contrary, it is obvious enough that even the *political* aspects of the covenant and promises were for ultimate spiritual purposes. They were called out from Ur of Chaldea, made to sojourn in a strange land, were finally settled in Canaan, isolated from the neighboring nations, and bound together by ordinances of divine appointment, differing essentially from those of any other people, for purposes which were chiefly *spiritual*; that the blessing of God might come on them, and through them upon "all the families of the earth"—to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. Had the Jew special advantages, or was there profit in circumcision? Yes, "much every way, chiefly because that

unto them were committed the oracles of God.” And these oracles are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for *instruction in righteousness*: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

God’s *requirements*, also, of Abraham and his seed were such as only a spiritual people could comply with. “I am the Almighty God; *walk before me, and be thou perfect.*” His *promises* also were applicable only to such. “I will be a *God* unto thee and to thy seed after thee.” He does not say, I will be a *sovereign* unto thee, etc., to be supported and served; but a *God*, to be loved and worshiped. And, correlatively, they were called *the people of God*, or *his people*. “And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of *my people* which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry.” Exod. iii, 7. “Comfort ye, comfort ye *my people*, saith your God.” Isa. xl, 1. “By faith Moses . . . refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with *the people of God*,” etc. Heb. xi, 24, 25.

“*In blessing I will BLESS THEE.*” This promise has reference, doubtless, in part to Abraham’s *personal justification* by faith. Early in the history of God’s intercourse with him, it is



said, "He *believed* in the Lord, and he *counted* it to him for *righteousness*." The faith of Abraham is set forth in the Scriptures as the pattern of the faith of the Church in all ages, and his justification as a pledge of like justification to all that exercise like precious faith. Paul says, "It" (his faith) "was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

The "token of the covenant" received by Abraham and his posterity was not the sign and seal of any *secular* obligation on the part of either party of the covenant, but of the righteous character which pertains to the people of God in all ages. "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the *righteousness of the faith* which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that *righteousness* might be imputed unto *them* also." Every *characteristic* that attaches essentially to the Church of God, as defined by theologians, appertained pre-eminently to the Abrahamic people, when God had placed upon them the token of his covenant. I. They were "*a body*

*of people separated from the world for the service of God.*" Abraham was called out from his country and kindred, and his seed sojourned in a strange land. They were isolated from all other people during their entire history, that they might not learn the ways of idolatrous nations, but devote themselves to the service of Jehovah. "Thou art a *holy* people unto the Lord thy God : the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ; for ye were the fewest of all people : but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage. . . . Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them." Deut. vii, 6-11. 2. They observed "*ordinances of divine appointment.*" "Every man child among you shall be circumcised. . . . It shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. . . . My covenant shall be *in your flesh* for an everlasting covenant. And the uncir-

cumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii, 10-14.

The ordinances of *circumcision* and the *pascal supper* correspond with those of *baptism* and the *Lord's supper* in the present dispensation. But I will not multiply arguments in proof that God organized a *Church* with Abraham. The fact is too plain to need it.

It only remains for me to state that the *names* by which the Scriptures designate the Jewish people are those by which the *Church* is known in every age. They are called *House of Israel*. "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel." Isa. v, 7. *House of God*. "Having a high-priest over the house of God." Heb. x, 21. *Zion*. "The Lord shall comfort Zion." Isa. li, 3. *The Church*. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the *congregation* will I praise thee." Ps. xxii, 22. St. Paul, quoting this passage in Heb. ii, 12, says : "I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the *Church* will I sing praise unto thee." St. Stephen (Acts vii, 37, 38) says, "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto



you of your brethren, like unto me ; him shall ye hear. This is he that was in the *Church* in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai.”

The Hebrew people, therefore, possessed the *name* and *character* of the Church. And as it is acknowledged by all that there was no organized and visible Church prior to the call of Abraham and the covenant made with him, it follows that God instituted his visible Church with that patriarch, who, in Romans iv, 11, is called “the father of all them that believe.”

## CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH ; ITS IDENTITY IN THE JEWISH  
AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.§ I. *Statement of the Subject.*

WE come now to a very important point in the discussion of the subject of infant baptism, namely, the *identity of the Church*, or the essential *sameness* of the visible Church of God in all ages and under all dispensations. It is acknowledged by both parties (those that practice and those that oppose infant baptism) to be difficult to defend the practice of excluding infants from the Church, and hence from baptism, its initiatory rite, if we admit the identity of the Christian Church with the Jewish, into which God placed infants of believers by positive institution.\*

Hence it becomes a question of the highest

\* God made infants members of the covenant, that is, of the Church, by virtue of being children of believers, and not by receiving circumcision. Circumcision was not the institution, or the constitution of the membership of children born within the pale of the Church, but the *recognition* of it. " The uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not

moment, in the investigation of the subject, whether the doctrine of the Church's *identity* be settled beyond quibble or controversy. Either the Church which now exists, and is recognized by all as the Christian Church, is the *same* that existed in the days of the patriarchs and prophets, or it is *not*. If it be conceded that the Church of the apostles under the Messiah is *not the same* with that of the prophets under the divine leadership of the preceding dispensation, then one of the *main pillars* in support of the doctrine of infant baptism is taken away. Thus it is understood by all parties. All anti-Pedobaptist Churches, so far as I know, take the ground that the Jewish and Christian

circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ;" (the congregation of the Lord ;) "he hath broken my covenant." Genesis xvii, 14. Notice, he could "break the covenant," and he "cut off from his people," though he be "*not circumcised*." Hence, independent of circumcision, he was a member of his people, and a party to the covenant. Hence, also, the neglect of it on the part of the parents for the child, and then the neglect on the part of the child, when he should come to years, would bring upon him the awful penalty of excision from the Church of God, upon the charge of having broken the covenant.

By virtue, then, not of having received circumcision, but of the promise of God, confirmed by the oath, to be a God "*unto thee and thy seed*," the children with their parents were a party in the covenant.

Churches *are in no sense identical*. Those of them that hold that there *was* a visible Church organization proper prior to Christ's coming, teach (if they teach any thing on the subject) that at that time it was disorganized and its ranks disbanded, and that Christ proceeded to construct a new Church, having no essential connection with any organization which had preceded it.

On the other hand, all Pedobaptists maintain that at the coming of Christ the Church of God was transferred from the former dispensation to the present ; or, that it emerged from a state of comparative darkness and obscurity, which characterized the preceding age, into the fuller light of a more glorious dispensation ; or, which is the same thing, that our Lord revealed the more abundant measure of the divine Spirit and influence of gospel truth in the *same Church*. The following, from the pen of a master, is indorsed with the heartiest assent : "At the coming of the Messiah there was not one Church taken away and another set up in its room ; but the Church continued the same, in those that were the children of Abraham, according to the faith. It is common with divines to speak of the Jewish and the

Christian Churches as though they were two distinct and totally different things ; but that is not a correct view of the matter. The Christian Church is not another Church, but the very same that was before the coming of Christ, having the same faith with it, and interested in the same covenant. Great alterations, indeed, were made in the outward state and condition of the Church by the coming of the Messiah. The carnal privilege of the Jews, in their separation from other nations to give birth to the Messiah, then failed, and with that also their claim on that account to be the children of Abraham. The ordinances of worship suited to that state of things then expired and came to an end. New ordinances of worship were appointed, suitable to the new light and grace which were then bestowed upon the Church. The Gentiles came into the faith of Abraham along with the Jews, being made joint partakers with them in his blessing. But none of these things, nor the whole collectively, did make such an alteration in the Church but that it was still one and the same. . . . *The Church is, and always was, one and the same.*" — *Watson's Dictionary*, p. 241. The case being thus stated, I hesitate not to affirm my most assured confidence in

the Church's *identity*, and shall proceed to demonstrate the same by proofs drawn from the Scriptures.

§ 2. *Identity of the Church—Scriptural Argument.*

We have already seen that there was an organization in the dispensation before Christ came, called in the Scriptures "The Church." Those who teach that that Church passed away, was destroyed, or in some way came to an end, at or before the advent of our Lord, have failed to bring a solitary Scripture passage to prove their position. If an event ever transpired so remarkable as the abolition and annihilation of the Church, over which for nineteen hundred years the divine Being had manifested such parental tenderness, and with which he had borne with exhaustless patience; certainly, it would seem, there should be some indication of it somewhere in the Scriptures. Some sacred seer had foretold it, or some inspired historian had recorded it. Some weeping Jeremiah had disclosed its foreboding shadow, as it hung dark over the prospects of a doomed Church. But we look in vain for any such indication. No passage is found that teaches the doctrine. If



there be any such passage, where is it to be found ?

Again : No passage in the New Testament teaches that Christ or his apostles organized, or that Christ directed the apostles to organize, a *new Church*. If any affirm the contrary let them produce the passage, or tell us where it can be found. If any New Testament scripture be susceptible of such an interpretation, it must be the commission to evangelize the world, (Mark xvi, 15, 16,) "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*. He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." On this passage let it be noted :—

1. It gives direction to *preach the Gospel* ; but this was not *new*. The Gospel had been preached to Abraham nineteen hundred years before. It was a part of the covenant promise given to him when the Church was instituted with that patriarch. "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached before the Gospel unto Abraham*, saying, In thee shall *all nations be blessed*." Gal. iii, 8. Here we learn, not only that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham, but that the very covenant promise of a Saviour *was itself*

*the Gospel.* And this same Gospel was preached to the subsequent generations of Abraham's natural posterity. On this point St. Paul is explicit: "Unto *us* was the Gospel preached, as well as unto *them*:" (the Jews that fell through unbelief:) "but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." The apostolic commission to preach the Gospel to the world was not, therefore, a commission to do some *new* thing, much less to *organize a new Church*; but to perpetuate the work which had been going on for centuries.

2. There was, indeed, something *new* in this apostolic commission. It was a new thing to preach the Gospel to "*every creature*," to "*all nations*." For nearly twenty hundred years the peculiar privileges and blessings of the Church had been confined to the house and lineage of Abraham. But now the "middle wall of partition" between them and "all nations" was "broken down," and the blessings of the covenant were to flow freely to "*every creature*," and myriad millions of them were to be gathered under the lengthening cords of Jehovah's pavilion.

The Prophet Isaiah, in language addressed



to the desponding Church of his time, had predicted the ingathering of the Gentiles into her ranks in the following strain : " Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear ; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child ; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations : spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes ; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left ; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles.*"

The apostles, in extending the commission that Christ had given them, were enlarging the place of the tent, stretching forth the curtains of the habitations, lengthening the cords, and strengthening the stakes preparatory to the breaking forth of the Gentiles, who, though they had been " far off," were now " made nigh by the blood of Christ," and about to become " fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

3. This apostolic commission contained another *new* theory. Instead of the painful and bloody rite of circumcision being the " token of the covenant," the sign of recognition of

Church membership, *baptism* was now, and henceforth, to be "the token of the covenant" relation to God, and of the enjoyment of his favor—the sign of recognition of membership in the Church. From the days of Abraham to the hour in which Christ gave his commission to the apostles, no man had entered the Church of God without *circumcision*. Christ, John the Baptist, the apostles, and all the faithful, had received it. But from that hour, and ever henceforth, all must take their place in the ranks of the Church by the rite of *baptism*. And from the hour of giving this commission to the apostles, *circumcision* (except for the prejudice, blindness, and slowness of perception of the converted Jews it be tolerated for awhile) must be *laid aside*. Here, then, our Saviour *instituted* the ordinance of *Christian baptism* to take the *place* and answer the purposes (so far as these were to be perpetuated) of *circumcision*.

This point, I am aware, has been denied by opposers of infant baptism. But how absurd and useless to deny a truth so obvious and inevitable. A person might as well deny that the Christian sacrament of the Lord's supper has succeeded to and taken the place of the Jewish passover, as to deny that Christian bap-

tism succeeds to and takes the place of circumcision.

The apostolic commission, then, gave no authority to *organize a new Church*. It extended the covenant promises and privileges of the Church to "all nations." These, for centuries, had been the peculiar and exclusive inheritance of the Jewish people, when the Gentiles were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," but now they were to be "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." The *form* of the "token of the covenant" was thus *changed* from a painful and bloody rite to an ordinance more in harmony with the spirit of a more merciful and less burdensome dispensation. Where, then, I ask, is the authority which authorizes the belief that God, at the coming of Christ, disbanded his ancient Church, his covenant people, and organized a *new* Church having no necessary connection with, nor dependence upon, his covenant engagement with Abraham? Not in the Scriptures, surely. Every Scripture assumption even touching this immediate subject repudiates such a position. If, then, there be no Scripture passage which teaches either

the one or the other of these things, the doctrine must rest on the sheerest *assumption* of its advocates.

I shall endeavor now to show, that the wonderful position taken by the opposers of infant baptism being without Scripture warrant, is not only a groundless assumption, but is in direct opposition to the plain teachings of the Bible.

I. *The nature and character of the covenant* that God made with Abraham, when he organized with him the visible Church, precludes the idea and the possibility of its being dissolved, and the Church thereby becoming disorganized and disbanded, while the world stands, human probation continues, or eternity itself endures.

1. It is called (Gen. xvii, 7) "*an everlasting covenant:*" "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, *for an everlasting covenant*, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." Here, "thy seed after thee," signifies not only them who are of the circumcision, but also all who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness

of faith ;” and consequently *to all the people of God* in all subsequent ages—to *all believers*. Thus Paul to the Galatians, (iii, 29,) “ And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye *Abraham’s seed*, and heirs according to the promise.” The Psalmist says, “ He hath remembered his covenant *forever*, the word which he commanded to a *thousand generations*. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an *everlasting covenant*.” Psa. cv, 8–10. Paul to the Hebrews (xiii, 20) says: “ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*.”

Here, the blood of Jesus is called “ the blood of the everlasting covenant.” Whence we may learn that Christ’s atonement entered into and made part of the “ everlasting covenant ” made with Abraham. Hence it follows, that so long as there is a soul to be saved or blessed, on earth or in heaven, through the blood of Jesus, which is “ the blood of the everlasting covenant,” just so long will this covenant continue in force.

2. *This covenant contained three great promises.*



(a.) A numerous *seed*, natural and spiritual. Abraham's "seed" were to be as numerous as "the *stars* of heaven," as "the *sand* upon the seashore," as "the *dust* of the earth." He was to be "the father of many nations." This was to be fulfilled in part in his natural posterity, but more amply and especially in his spiritual "seed," for he, Abraham, is "the father of all them that believe;" "the father of us all." Rom. iv.

(b.) The land of *Canaan*; the type and the antitype; the earthly and the heavenly. His natural seed occupied the *typal* Canaan about fifteen centuries. And all the faithful will inherit the *antitypal* Canaan forever, by virtue of being redeemed by "the blood of the everlasting covenant." Hence the long line of heirs immortal chant the happy chorus:—

"O Canaan, bright Canaan,  
I am bound for the land of Canaan;  
O Canaan, it is my happy home,  
I am bound for the land of Canaan."

Abraham personally had no inheritance in the *typal* Canaan; "no, not so much as to set his feet on." Acts vii, 5. Indeed, he was obliged to *purchase a burial-place* therein for his loved Sarah. Gen. xxiii. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, *as in a strange country*,

dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations, [twelve, garnished with all manner of precious stones—Rev. xxi, 14–19—in the antitypal Canaan,] whose builder and maker is God. . . . These . . . confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. . . . But now they desire a *better country*, that is, a *heavenly*." Heb. xi, 9, 13, 16.

(c.) *The Messiah and Saviour.* The third and greatest covenant promise to Abraham and his seed was that of a *Saviour, Christ*. "In thee *shall all families of the earth be blessed*." Gen. xii, 3. "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him*." Gen. xviii, 18. "*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*." Gen. xxii, 18.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, (Acts iii, 25, 26,) says to the disobedient Jews, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy *seed* shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up *his Son Jesus* sent him to *bless* you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Here, the apostle in-



interprets the promise, to all "families," "nations," and "kindreds" of the earth, of being "*blessed*," to be fulfilled in the gift and sending of "*his Son Jesus*;" and the *mode* of blessing them, to consist in "turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

Paul also explains: "In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be *of faith are blessed* with faithful Abraham. (Gal. iii, 8, 9.) Now to Abraham and his *seed* were the promises made. He saith not, And to *seeds*, as of *many*; but as of *one*, And to thy *seed*, which is *Christ*." Ver. 16.

The covenant, therefore, embraces these three promises, and by virtue of each of them it is, and must ever be, what it is styled in the Scripture, "THE EVERLASTING COVENANT." In the nature of the case, neither the covenant nor the promises thereof can ever be annulled, invalidated, or in any respect or degree rendered ineffectual or void while time shall last or eternity endure. But the formation of this covenant IS ITSELF *the organization of the Church*. Its promises, on the part of the divine Being, in connection with the fulfillment of their stipulated conditions on the part of Abraham and his seed, *constitute* the very warp and woof of

the ancient Church institute. If this be not evident at once, it will appear upon a little reflection. The covenant, as we have seen, consisted on the one part in making and confirming *three great promises*; and on the other part, in observing the conditions upon which these promises were made. These conditions were: *First.* Faithful adherence to the Lord as their *God*: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, . . . to be a *God* unto thee." *Second.* Faithful service to him as a *religious people*: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." *Third.* Faithful observance of the rite of *circumcision*, which was a badge of distinction, and pledge of separation from the world: "Every man child among you shall be circumcised."

Every person must see that the covenant thus made and ratified between the parties, is the very essence of the visible Church organization; and that these must *stand or fall together*.

Can the visible Church, therefore, constituted nearly forty centuries ago, be abolished? Not while there is a soul to be saved, through the blood of the Crucified; not while there is a glorified saint to enjoy the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, through the virtue of the same shed blood. "The blood

of the everlasting covenant," will be celebrated in heaven by untold millions, who will sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing ; . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God *by thy blood* out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The blood of this same everlasting covenant is the foundation of the sinner's hope, and of the song of the redeemed in glory ; and "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The above facts and arguments, founded on the nature of the Abrahamic covenant, are regarded as demonstration complete of the identity of the Church of God in all ages. Nevertheless, other facts and other arguments, drawn from other aspects of the case, will now be presented.

II. We have the *direct testimony of St. Paul*, to the effect that the Abrahamic covenant *cannot be disannulled*, since God remains faithful to his promise and his oath : "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely, blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee. And so, after he had

patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the *immutability of his counsel*, [promise,] *confirmed it* by an oath: that by *two immutable things*, [the promise and the oath,] in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high-priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Heb. vi, 13-20.

"Which hope *we*," "heirs of the promise," Christians of all ages, "*have*." "Entereth into that within the vail"—extendeth to the heavenly inheritance. *Why?* Because "when God made *promise to Abraham* he *confirmed it by an oath*." That is, *OUR hope of heaven* is founded on *God's covenant promise to Abraham*, which he confirmed by an oath. The Abrahamic covenant, therefore, *is* not, and, since "it is impossible for God to lie," *can never be, disannulled*.

In the same manner, with a little variation

of terms, the same apostle discourses to the Galatians, (iii, 13-18,) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: . . . that the *blessing of Abraham* might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a *man's covenant*, yet if it be *confirmed*, no man *disannulleth*, or *addeth thereto*. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that THE COVENANT, *that was confirmed before of God in Christ*, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, CANNOT DISANNUL, that it should make the *promise* of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise."

The apostle's reasoning runs thus: The *covenant* that was *confirmed* of GOD IN CHRIST, to Abraham and his seed, four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law at Sinai, CANNOT BE DISANNULLED by that law, nor, by parity of reasoning, by any other thing, since no man can *disannul*, or *add to*, a *covenant*,



“though it be but a MAN’S,” provided it be *confirmed*. Or,

His argument may be set forth in this statement: Since no man can *disannul*, or *add to*, a *covenant*, in case it be *confirmed*, “though it be but a MAN’S covenant;” then surely the *covenant with Abraham and his seed*, which “was *confirmed* before of GOD IN CHRIST,” four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law at Sinai, CANNOT BE DISANNULLED by the law; nor, by parity of reasoning, by any thing else.

That the Abrahamic covenant embraced *Christ*, and all blessings through him, is plain, not only from the fact that Paul explains “the seed” to signify Christ; but also from the fact that “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, *that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.*”

But, as the formation and confirmation of this covenant, which *cannot be disannulled*, is the organization of the Church, it follows that the latter has not been, and will not be, dissolved. This is the second demonstration of the same thing.

III. *The Church*, in both dispensations, exhibits



*marks of identity*, and inherits the *same characteristics*. In both it has gladly recognized the same Sovereign Ruler, Mediator, sanctifying Spirit; the same doctrine of atonement, moral law, justification by faith, regeneration, resurrection of the dead, future rewards and punishments—in fine, the same doctrines throughout, as are embraced in the plan of redemption and developed in the Gospel. These doctrines are, indeed, more fully revealed to, and more fully apprehended by, the Church in these days; this is what characterizes the Christian dispensation, and constitutes its excellence. But they all were more or less fully taught and developed in the Church of the Mosaic dispensation.

In both dispensations, also, the Church is known by the same *appellations*. God calls them his “people,” his “sheep,” his “vine,” his “vineyard,” his “elect,” his “chosen,” his “own,” his “children,” his “sons and daughters,” his “house,” his “household,” the “house of Jacob,” (Luke i, 33,) “house of Israel, and house of Judah,” (Heb. viii, 8,) “Zion,” “The Church.”

In both, also, the Church contains the *same individuals in membership*. Jesus, John the Baptist, James the son of Zebedee, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, James the son of Alpheus,

Thaddeus, Simon, etc., etc. We never hear of any of these leaving the Church of the former dispensation to join that of the latter, as if they were separate and distinct Churches. Nor do we hear of the Church of the former going to dissolution while its members continue in the faith; nor of its members abandoning the Church in which they had held membership to organize a new one; which, indeed, is not a *new*, but one possessing the same *characteristics, names, and members*, as before.

While in both dispensations *the Church* is thus identical in name and nature, in individual membership, and acknowledges divine proprietorship, and this is all the identity contended for, it is difficult to conceive in what respect or sense the Church can be *not* identical. For no matter how much its legislation may have been improved in passing from a condition comparatively dark and gloomy to one more luminous and glorious, such a transition could not invalidate its organization, nor abrogate its covenant promises, to those who repose faith in them.

If *the State* should contain one half the marks of identity which the *Church* exhibits, namely, identity of governing power and con-

stitution, in its essential features, especially in its conditions of citizenship, its identity would not be questioned. Although its legislatures should continue annually to abolish, alter, and amend its laws and add others, it would still remain the *same political body*. So in the Church. "What is the chief and only important difference," asks Dr. Rice, "between the two dispensations? Under the former there was a code of ceremonial and civil laws adapted to the existing state of the Church; which, after the death of Christ, gave place to a few simple ordinances adapted to the Church as about to be extended in her boundaries to all nations. . . . The civil and ceremonial laws were appointed by God for a *specific purpose*, and for a *limited time*. So Paul teaches in Galatians, iii, 19: 'Wherefore then serveth the law? It *was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made*.' It was added because of transgressions; it was designed to keep the Jews entirely distinct and separate from the pagans, that they might not be drawn away from their allegiance to God; and it was to continue in force till Christ, the seed to whom the promise was made, should come."—*Campbell and Rice's Debate*, p. 284.

- And now, because this civil and ceremonial code is abolished, are we to suppose the Church of God passed away with it? The burdensome ceremonial of the Levitical law, so necessary to fill the divine purpose at the time, was the very thing which rendered it impossible that the Church should embrace the Gentile nations.

But upon the death of Christ this civil and ceremonial code expired by limitation, and the apostles were now commissioned to go forth and offer to "all nations" and "to every creature" the blessings "of the covenant, and the service of God, and the promises," which had through all the foregoing dispensation "pertained to the Israelites," and been confined exclusively to that people.

§ 3.—*Identity of the Church—Scriptural Arguments Continued.*

In varying the argument somewhat upon the subject, it may be necessary to remark:—

I. That when intelligent Pedobaptists speak of the Jewish Church and of the Christian Church, as they sometimes do, they do not wish to be understood as speaking of them as different and distinct Churches, which have no necessary relation to, connection with, or dependence

upon each other, but as speaking of the *same Church of God* under the different dispensations—Mosaic and Christian.

Indeed, the phrases *Jewish Church* and *Christian Church* are entirely foreign to the holy Scriptures, being nowhere found in them. Nor is such a form of words as *the Church of Christ* to be met with anywhere in the Bible. It is always the *Church*, or, *the Church of God*.

It is not a little remarkable that, if the Church of the Abrahamic covenant began and ended its career in the earlier dispensation, there is not in the Scriptures some distinctive appellation by which this distinctive *fact* could be recognized, as *Jewish Church*, *Mosaic Church*, or some other adjunct by which it could be more essentially described. Nor is it less remarkable, that, if the Church now subsisting began about the time of the Saviour's advent, and is, therefore, only co-extensive with the later dispensation, there is no inspired formulary designating this fact. On the other hand, it is a significant fact that, as we have seen, the Church of all ages is not only described as having the same characteristics, and serving the same purposes, but is designated by the same appellations.

2. Abraham, by the authority of inspiration,



is called "the father" of all the members of the *Jewish Church*: "The father of circumcision." Rom. iv, 12. In like manner, also, he is called the father of all the members of the *Christian Church*: "The father of all them that believe." Rom. iv, 11. "The father of us all," Ver. 16. And, correlatively, all the members of the Christian Church are called Abraham's children: "If ye be *Christ's*, then are ye *Abraham's seed*." The Scriptures, therefore, place Abraham in precisely the same relation to the *Christian*, that he sustains to the *Jewish*, Church. This must be because they operate under, and are co-heirs of, the promised blessings of the same great Church charter—the Abrahamic covenant. The Churches are, therefore, *identical*.

If Abraham be not the father of the Christian Church, he does not lack much of it, being the father of all its members. *Why is this?* No other person—Moses, Noah, Daniel, Job—occupy any such relation to us. If we be *Christ's*, we are not, on such account, said to be Moses's seed, Noah's seed, etc. *Why?* Let Paul answer: "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: *that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not*



*circumcised.*" That is, he received circumcision—"the token of the covenant"—that he might be the father of all Christian believers. Then they are in the same covenant obligation, and in the *same Church with him*. Is it not so?

3. Supposing the Jewish Church to have been *abolished*, somewhere about the time of the Saviour's advent, *when*, specifically, did its abolishment *occur*? Such an event must have constituted an epoch in the history of a Church which had existed nearly two thousand years, and had been the subject of a career more marvelously eventful than any other organization known to mankind! And if the Christian Church was *commenced*, as a separate and distinct organization, at, or somewhere about, the time the Jewish Church was abolished, *when*, specifically, did that event *occur*? For the organization of a *new Church*, destined to fill the whole earth, and increase in power, patronage, and splendor to the end of time, must have constituted an epoch! Leave this thought for a moment and attend to another.

All anti-Pedobaptists will tell us, "There were some things peculiar to the *Jewish Church* which have no place in the Christian; and other things peculiar to the *Christian Church*

which had no place in the *Jewish*." Granted : what things ? " Well, for example, the Jewish *feast of the passover*, which was never known to be observed in the Christian Church." Granted. Well, what is there peculiar to the *Christian* Church ? " The celebration of the *Lord's supper*, which is to be observed by Christian believers to the end of time ; but not having been an institution of the Jewish Church, was not known in it." Granted.

Let us attend now to a statement of the evangelist St. Luke, xxii, 7-20 : " Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the pass-over must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare ? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water ; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples ? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished : there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them : and they made ready

the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Also of St. Matthew, xxvi, 26-30: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with

you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."

(a.) Here are members of the *Jewish Church* celebrating for the last time the *passover*, an institution *peculiar to that Church*; an ordinance which had been observed among them for fifteen hundred years.

(b.) "As they were eating" the passover, Jesus took bread and wine, and instituted, and administered to his disciples, the Lord's supper, an ordinance *peculiar to the Christian Church*, and to be observed to the end of time.

(c.) Now upon the hypothesis that the Jewish and Christian Churches are *not identical*, it follows that, "while they were eating" the *paschal* supper, and the *Lord's* supper, the Jewish Church was disbanded, and the Christian Church was organized! For they could be eating the paschal supper only as members of the former; and the Lord's supper only as members of the latter.

(d.) If this be so, *when*, and by what *transaction*, were these things done? By what decree, or act, was the Jewish Church made to disappear and the Christian to spring into being? But upon the hypothesis that the Churches are

*identical*, the explanation is simple and easy. Christ had only to displace an ordinance whose significance was about to pass away by another, the symbols of which should perpetuate the agony of the cross, and the mercy of God in our redemption.

(e.) When Christ and his apostles sat down to eat that last passover, they were all members in good standing of the *Jewish Church*. They had come into it by circumcision; or more properly, at eight days of age they had each received "the token of the covenant" in recognition of their membership in the Church of God. But, upon the supposition of the anti-Pedobaptists, when they rose up and retired they were members of an entirely *different* Church—the *Christian*—for the Saviour had administered, and the apostles had received, an ordinance never given or received out of the Christian Church.

And how did they become dismembered from the *Jewish Church*? They were not *expelled* for unfaithfulness. They did not *retire* by mutual consent of parties. *How* was it they were no longer members of the Church in which they had held membership so long? And how did they get *into*, or become members of the *Chris-*



*tian Church?* They certainly did not receive Christian *baptism* ! At the time of eating that last paschal supper Christian baptism had not been instituted. No command had been given to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Nor do we *ever* hear of one of the twelve receiving Christian baptism. The question still recurs, How did they become members of the Christian Church? Upon the supposition that the Churches are *identical*, the mystery disappears at once, and the whole subject becomes luminous as the sun. Consistency is manifest in the whole transaction. The apostles had once *received* the "token of the covenant," the sign of circumcision, by which they were recognized members of God's Church ; and now that baptism takes the place of circumcision, they have no more need of receiving baptism than if they *had* been baptized. Thus, if we treat the subject as the *Bible* treats it, making no such distinction between the Jewish and Christian Churches as to make them separate and distinct, and mutually to displace each other, but refer to them as the *one* "*Church of God*," it becomes invested with consistency and harmony.

(f.) If the apostles and converts to Chris-



tianity were members of a *new Church*, after the crucifixion of our Lord, a Church distinct entirely from that of the old dispensation, it is marvelously strange that they did not *know* it. About twenty years after the crucifixion (in A. D. 52) Paul and Barnabas went all the way from Antioch in Syria to Jerusalem, and called a council of the apostles and elders, to consult as to whether they should *continue the rite of circumcision in the Church*: and doubtless up to that time *all the Jews* converted to the Christian religion had practiced circumcision in the case of their infant children, and, so far as we know, without the least objection on the part of the apostles. But how absurd all this would have been if they had had the remotest idea that the old Church (requiring circumcision) had been abolished, and a new one set up in its place; unless, indeed, they had believed the Saviour to have instituted circumcision, as well as baptism, in the new Church.

§ 4. *The Church—Identity shown from passages in the Old Testament Scriptures.*

The purpose of this section is to examine a few passages in the Old Testament Scriptures, showing the tenor of their teaching touching

the subject under consideration—the identity of the Church.

1. The first passage that is proposed for the purpose is found in Isaiah liv, 1–8 : “ Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear ; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child : for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations : spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes ; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left ; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed : neither be thou confounded ; for thou shalt not be put to shame : for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy husband ; the Lord of hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great

mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

(a.) This is the address of the prophet to the Church of the Abrahamic covenant, more than seven centuries before the coming of the Messiah. And I desire the reader to turn to the passage and read the entire chapter, for it is full of promise of enlargement and future prosperity, assuring the Church that the divine kindness should not depart from her, neither should the "covenant of peace" be removed. He compares her—under that dispensation confined within the narrow limits of Judea, and still more, to a small number of true believers—to a barren woman, "forsaken and grieved in spirit" and "refused" of her husband, sitting in her tent, and, in her desolate condition, mourning the want of family and friends.

(b.) His language to her is the very *opposite* to that which any sane man could possibly imagine it would have been, on the supposition that she was still to decline and pass away, and give place to another, who, in her stead, should receive the wonderful promises of "the everlasting covenant," originally made to her.

Mark the terms of the covenant made with this Church, this now "barren" and "desolate," "forsaken and grieved" woman: "I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all the countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxvi, 3, 4. "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt *spread abroad* to the *west*, and to the *east*, to the *north*, and to the *south*: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxviii, 14.

These promises unvail to the vision of the Church of the Abrahamic covenant a brilliant and boundless prospect, extending through the vista of all the coming future. And in this they comport well with the sublime and cheering address of the prophet. But the language of the covenant, and that of the prophet, are alike *unintelligible* and *unaccountable* if addressed to a Church which is destined to wane until it passes away; to decline and perish before its covenant promises scarcely begin to be realized! No, no; this prophetic address to the desponding Church is the most cheering and hopeful

imaginable. "*Sing, O barren, . . . cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child!*" Why? "*More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.* Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes!" Why? "Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and *thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles.*"

"The conversion of the Gentiles," says Adam Clarke, (*Comment in loc.*), "is all along considered by the prophet as a new accession of adopted children, admitted into the original Church of God, and united with it." But can the reader tell me *how* these promises could have been fulfilled; *how* and *when* this ancient Church "inherited" such an accession of adopted Gentile children, if, forsooth, this spouse of "the Holy One of Israel" became, before the coming of the Lord, as the children of Rachel?

2. Isaiah lix, 20, 21: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and

my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." Isaiah lx, 1-5 : " Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people : but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see : . . . thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged ; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

Look now carefully upon this remarkable passage. If the prophet in vision had seen the ancient Church open her arms to receive the Gentile tribes, ready and anxious to enter the inclosure, and had thus witnessed her increase in numbers and prosperity until the millennium, he could not have written in more animating terms, or better portrayed to us her happy



condition. But how inexplicable his language upon any other hypothesis ; especially upon that of the anti-Pedobaptists, that this ancient Church organization was to become extinct at the coming of the "Redeemer to Zion."

(a.) The prophet addresses the *Church* : "The Redeemer shall come to *Zion*, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." Though it be yet seven hundred years before the Redeemer shall come, yet (such is the glory of the event) he animates and encourages her with the prospect. Thus also did Malachi, three hundred years later : "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." But, lo ! it is a sad prospect for "Zion" if at that time she is to be *dissolved, annihilated !* But not so : "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, *shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth and forever.*" That is a glorious prospect for "Zion ;" a thousand times better than annihilation !

(b.) "Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and

gross darkness the people ; but the Lord shall arise upon thee."

Here the prophet compares Zion, illuminated by the Spirit, to the sun rising in the Orient, and represents "the people" enveloped in the "gross darkness" of paganism and idolatry, as seeing her arrayed with the glory of the Lord.

(c.) "And the *Gentiles* shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see." How glorious is the vision of "Gentiles and kings" coming to Zion, resplendent with the Divine glory !

"*All* they gather themselves together, they shall *come to thee*,"—*Zion*. Surely the prophet had his eye on the coming millennium. "Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." Yes, for they all are thy "*seed*," Jews or Gentiles.

"Thou shalt see, and *flow together*." Yea, by one Spirit are they all baptized into *one body*, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. xii, 13. "And," *Zion*, "thine heart shall fear and be enlarged," (enough to take in all the Gentiles,) "because the abundance of the sea shall be converted

unto thee, and the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

These prophetic utterances demonstrate unmistakably the enlargement and prosperity of the Church of Isaiah's time, until the Gentiles and kings of the earth shall become the seed of Abraham; until the sons coming from far, and the daughters that were far off, are brought nigh, and shall occupy a place within the pale of the Church; until "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." And, as that happy state of things did not come in the former dispensation, it follows that the *same Church of God* thus addressed by the prophet is yet to realize the fulfillment of these promises.

§ 5. *The Church—Its Identity shown from passages in the New Testament Scriptures.*

The New Testament Scriptures are outspoken and clear in regard to the identity of the Church in all ages; and it would seem that none, without a cause to serve, would fail to see it and acknowledge it; but, alas! the inveteracy of prejudice and creed is not easy to be overcome, even by the power of truth itself. It bends and binds every thing to its darling theory, sparing

not even the Holy Scriptures. In this section I shall call the reader's attention to *four passages* which are clear and decisive respecting the question of Church identity.

1. Hebrews iii, 1-6: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

The following is the comment of Professor Stuart on this passage: "Now Moses truly was faithful in all God's Church, as a servant; but Christ as a Son over this same Church, which Church are we, provided we hold fast unto the end our confidence and joyful hope."

The argument is brief but conclusive.

(a.) It will not be disputed that "his house" in the text, "over" which God "appointed" "Christ as a Son," and "in" which he employed "Moses as a servant," signifies the *Church*.

(b.) All Christians constitute this Church. "Whose (Christ's) *house are we*, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

(c.) Therefore, the Church in which Moses was servant, and over which Christ is Son and proprietor, is ONE CHURCH.

Or, the argument may run thus: The Church of God is called, "his house." There is but *one* house spoken of. In this house Moses was a servant, Jesus is a Son, and Christians are members. The Church of God is ONE.

2. Matthew xxi, 33-43: "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more



than the first : and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir ; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen ? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner : this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes ? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

(a.) Let it be noted that *vineyard*, in verse 33, and *the kingdom of God*, in verse 43, each signifies the Church. Mr. Watson, on verse 33, says, "*A vineyard*—The Jewish Church."

(b.) Our Saviour did not tell the Jews that the *Church* which had been established among them so long should, with all its powers and



privileges, be annihilated, and its covenant promises be abrogated ; but he assures them that it should be "TAKEN FROM" them, and "GIVEN TO" another nation, (race of people.) He speaks not of the Church being *disorganized* among the Jews, nor of its being *organized* among the Gentiles ; but of its *transfer* from the one to the other. The *same Church* has come into different hands. No language could make the case clearer. The *proof is complete*. *Christ himself* teaches that the *Church, intact*, is *taken from the Jews*, and *given to the Gentiles*.

3. Romans xi, 16-25 : "For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy : and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree ; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear : for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and

severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in : for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree ; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree ? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceit, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

*The olive-tree* in verse 17 (a figure borrowed from Jeremiah xi, 16) is generally, yes, universally, understood by expositors and commentators to signify the *Church of God*. Of this, I think, there will be no denial, there can be no doubt. "*Some of the branches*—Jews, because of their unbelief, are cut off from the blessings of the *Church of God*. *The fatness of the olive-tree*—The promises made to the patriarch, and the spiritual blessings of *the Jewish Church*."—*Clarke*. "It is from its beauty and richness that the apostle selects the

*olive-tree* as an emblem of *the Church of God*." — *Whedon*. "By the olive-tree we understand the visible *Church of God*." — *Burkitt*.

(a.) Of this *olive-tree—the Church*—the Jews are called (verses 21, 24) *the natural branches*.

(b.) Some of them are said to be *broken off* through unbelief, (verses 17, 20,) while others remain.

(c.) The Gentiles are said to be *grafted in among* the remaining Jews, and *with them* to "partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree." Verses 17, 19, 24.

(d.) If the Jews, that were broken off, abide not still in unbelief, it is said (verses 23, 24) they shall be grafted in *again*.

(e.) *When* the Jews shall be grafted in *again*, (though it be a thousand years after Christ,) they will still be the *natural branches* of their *own olive-tree*, growing together with the *Gentiles* grafted into the same. Verse 24.

(f.) But these things cannot possibly be true, unless the Jewish and Christian Churches are the *same*.

4. Ephesians ii, 11–16, 19–22, and iii, 6: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circum-

cision in the flesh made by hands ; that at that time ye were without Christ, being *aliens* from the *commonwealth of Israel*, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world : but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made *both one*, and hath *broken down the middle wall of partition between us* ; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in himself of *twain one new man*, so making peace ; and that he might reconcile *both* unto God *in one body* by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but *fellow-citizens with the saints*, and of *the household of God* ; and are built upon the *foundation* of the *apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom all *the building* fitly framed together groweth unto *a holy temple* in the Lord : in whom ye also are builded together for *a habitation* of God through the Spirit. . . . That the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs*, and of *the same body*, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel."

In this wonderful passage, the *Church of God* is designated in a variety of verbal forms.

(a.) As distinguished from Gentilism under the earlier dispensation, it is called, "The Circumcision." Verse 11.

(b.) As that form to which the Ephesians, in common with other Gentiles, were aliens, it is designated by the phrase, "Commonwealth of Israel." Ver. 12. "They *were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*: that is, they were not members of *Christ's Church*, either visible or invisible."—*Burkitt*.

(c.) By implication, it is represented as *an edifice*, in which Christ, having "broken down the middle wall of partition between" Jews and Gentiles, "hath made *both one*." Verse 14.

(d.) As that in which Christ "reconciled both" Jews and Gentiles "by the cross," it is set forth as *one body*. Verse 16.

(e.) As that to which, in the later dispensation, the Gentiles "are no more strangers and foreigners," but in which they "are fellow-citizens with the saints;" (God's ancient and covenanted people; "that is," says Mr. Burkitt, "the patriarchs and prophets, and all other members of the Church of the Jews,") it is called, "The household of God." Verse 19.



(f.) As a spacious and magnificent “building, fitly framed together,” and extending across the lines of both dispensations, and in which the workmen of both—“apostles and prophets”—were engaged in laying its strong “foundations,” and also in which “Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone,” it is said to be, “*A holy temple in the Lord.*” Verses 20, 21.

(g.) As a place of special spiritual illumination, and union of Jews and Gentiles, it is called, “*A habitation of God.*” Verse 22.

(h.) And, in view of the fact that “the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs* with the saints”—patriarchs and prophets—and “of the covenant promise in Christ by the Gospel,” it is declared to be, “THE SAME BODY.” Chapter iii, 6.

If this remarkable passage does not demonstrate conclusively *the Identity of God's visible Church* from the days of Abraham to the end of the world, it is believed that no language can possibly indicate such demonstration. In each Scripture quotation in this section, the proof of the doctrine in question is regarded alike *complete and unanswerable*.

Some one has somewhere said, substantially, what is here and now heartily indorsed; that,



it is *not more certain* that a *man*, with increased *stature, strength, knowledge, and wisdom*, is the SAME PERSON that he was when an INFANT, than it is that the CHURCH, in this dispensation of *increased light, knowledge, privilege, and experience*, is the SAME CHURCH which existed many centuries before, with a much less amount of light and experience.

When the divine Being organized the visible Church, he placed *the infants of believers in it as members*, and caused the *public recognition* of their *membership* by *express and positive enactment*; placing upon them the sign of circumcision—the “token of the covenant.” (See Gen. xvii, 9–14.) If, therefore, infants are *not now* to be regarded as *members* of the *same Church of God*, we require and demand the authority—the law as express and positive—showing the *ground of their dismemberment*. It will not do to say, “Many things are changed in this dispensation, and infants are no longer members,” unless *that is changed* which gave them a place in the Church, viz., *the express will of God on this subject*. It will not do to say, “There is no express command in the New Testament to recognize the membership of infants by giving them baptism,” because it will be maintained

that there is no need of such command, since baptism supplies the place of circumcision—is now the rite by which membership in the Church is recognized.\*

It is admitted that a *change* respecting many things was made in the Church when the “kingdom of God” was “*taken from*” the Jews “and *given to*” a people “bringing forth the fruits thereof.” But *that very change* was, in part, the inauguration of a more mild, merciful, and glorious dispensation. The whole Mosaic civil code, instituted with God’s chosen people for governmental purposes, and designed to be in force only while the scepter should remain with Judah, and the entire ceremonial service, that “middle wall of partition” and “law of commandments contained in ordinances,” was, when Shiloh came, “broken down,” and he “took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.” Its entire machinery was “abolished” in order to give place to a few simple ordinances, suitable to be observed by “all nations” and “every creature.”

\* There is no more need of a *command* for giving baptism to infants, than there would have been for giving circumcision to them in case the latter had been continued in the Church instead of baptism. And if the rite of initiation had not been changed, who would have thought of asking for a new command for continuing the rite of circumcision?

The paschal supper gives place to the Lord's supper, and circumcision to baptism. But it is a *memorable fact* that in all the changes made in passing from the one dispensation to the other, requiring such "differences of administrations" by "the same Lord," and in all the records of holy Scripture, the Divine Proprietor of the Church has *nowhere indicated*, nor in *anywise intimated*, his purpose to EXCLUDE INFANTS *from membership therein*; but on the contrary.

## CHAPTER IV.

ALL THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES, TOUCHING THE RELATION OF INFANTS TO THE CHURCH, PLAINLY RECOGNIZES THEIR MEMBERSHIP.

I. Matthew xix, 14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

(a.) Let it be observed that these "children" were *infants proper*. Anti-Pedobaptists have contended that, for any thing we know to the contrary, they were children of competent age to choose the service of Christ for themselves, and so as capable of receiving baptism as *adult* believers.

But St. Luke says, (xviii, 15, 16,) "They brought unto him also (βρέφος) *infants*," or *babes*. Jesus said, "Suffer (παιδιά) *little* children to come unto me." Mark says, (x, 16,) "*He took them up in his arms*, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." These facts determine the case that they were infants proper.

It was shown in chap. v, in answer to objec-

tion 5, that the anti-Pedobaptists baptize their candidates, not because they are *believers*, but because, as believers, they are in a *regenerate state*; they never admit them except upon such a confession, actual or implied. It was shown, also, that infants, by virtue of the relation they sustain to Christ, are in the same state of grace; and that infants, therefore, are entitled to baptism on the *same ground* as adult *believers*.

(b.) "*Suffer little children,*" etc. He does not say, Suffer *those* little children to come unto me, as if there were something in the case of those particular children, which makes it proper for *them* to come. His words are of universal application, and show that *all little children* may come to him, because they all bear to him the *same relation*.

(c.) It has been said, that "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," does not mean that the identical children *themselves* are of the kingdom of heaven, but that those adults who *resemble* little children are of the kingdom of heaven. And reference is made to Matthew xviii, 3, 4, in support of this view of the case: "Except ye be converted, and become *as* little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself *as*

this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." To this I reply, 1. This view of the case scarcely admits of a fair exposition of Christ's words. "*Of such is the kingdom of heaven,*" is equivalent to, *The kingdom of heaven is composed in part "of such:"* which he would hardly have said if little children did not belong to his kingdom. 2. It would appear singularly strange if the Saviour, presenting in little children a model condition of the souls of his kingdom, should affirm that those who should resemble the model most nearly should be its inheritors, while the model children *themselves* should be *excluded!* 3. Jesus assigns as the *reason why* the little children should be brought to him, that "*of such is the kingdom of heaven;*" but if they *themselves* were not of the kingdom of heaven, it could not be the reason why *they* should be *brought to him*. The followers of Jesus, in some respects, resemble *sheep*, (John x,) but that would be a ridiculous reason for *bringing sheep to Christ!*

(d.) The phrase, "The kingdom of heaven," in this passage, either means the Church militant or the Church triumphant; the Church on earth or the Church on high. On the



Saviour's lips it usually signified the *former*; more rarely the *latter*. If, in the text, it be affirmed that *infants* are "of" the Church *on high*, then, surely, they are not unfit for a place in the Church *on earth*; more properly, if infants are "of" the Church *on high*, they are also "of" the Church *on earth*, and are entitled to baptism by water, both as a symbol of their regenerate *state*, and as a sign of *recognition of their relation to the Church*. But, if Jesus affirmed that infants are "of" the Church *on earth*, then the controversy is at an *end*; *they should be baptized*.

2. Matthew xxviii, 19: "Go ye therefore, and teach (more literally, *disciple or proselyte*) all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

By the use of this language the Saviour *instituted Christian baptism*. Until then, all male Jews (the females were represented in the males) since the days of Abraham had entered the visible Church in their infancy by their birth, and their membership in it was recognized at eight days of age by *circumcision*. Proselytes, (strangers, coming from abroad,) adults, and infants, had entered it by *circumcision, sacrifice, and baptism*. From that time

henceforth "all nations" were to enter it by baptism in the name of the *Trinity*. Many of the Jews, converted from Judaism to Christianity, did for many years, in connection with Christian baptism, apply also to their male infants the rite of circumcision. Christ, so far as we know, said little, if any thing, in regard to laying it aside. Nearly twenty years after Christ's death (A. D. 51 or 52) Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Church at Antioch to counsel with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (Acts xv) in regard to the question whether the practice of circumcision should be *required of the Gentile converts*, for the converted Jews had insisted on the Gentile Christians receiving it. And it was not until there had been long consultation, and "much disputing" in the council, that they decided to "trouble not" the Gentiles with the "burden" of circumcision. But it is quite certain that the Jewish Christians still continued to practice the rite in the case of their infant male children for a long time afterward.

In *one* sense its continued practice would, as Mr. Watson (*Dic.*, p. 249) remarks, "involve the rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ." For circumcision being a sign and seal of faith in a Messiah *yet to come*, as "the

seed of Abraham," in whom all the nations were to be blessed, his *coming*, and entry upon the office of Mediator, would render the rite an obsolete ordinance, to continue which would seem to involve his rejection as the object of their faith, and would argue an expectation of a Messiah still yet to come.

It was probably upon this ground that St. Paul spoke thus boldly to the Galatians, (v, 2, 3,) "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Yet, obviously, there is *another sense* in which it might be, and evidently was, innocently, though not wisely, practiced. If, for the purpose merely "of preserving an ancient national distinction, upon which they valued themselves," the Jewish Christians continued to circumcise their children, they should not be harshly censured. It must have been with some such modified view of the case that Paul, to avoid coming in conflict with Jewish prejudice, allowed himself to circumcise Timothy, (Acts xiii, 3,) whose mother was a Jewess. He did it "because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek."

In his epistle to the pious Hebrews, written A. D. 64, Paul preserves an entire silence on the question of circumcision. He probably knew that they all *practiced the rite*, and he did not wish to encounter their prejudice or opposition on that subject.

Query No. 1. Did those pious Hebrews, (members of the Christian Church,) who, for more than a half century after Christ, circumcised their infants, regard those circumcised infants as members of the Church, as they had ever regarded their infant children in the old dispensation? If they did *not*, *why* did they not? And if they *did* thus regard them, and it were wrong to do so, *why* did not the apostles correct their error?

Query No. 2. Did the apostle "James," (bishop of the Jerusalem Church,) "the brethren," and "all the elders," regard the circumcised infant children of the "many thousands of Jews which believed" (see Acts xxi, 17-21) as *members of the Church*, or did they *not*? If they did not, then *why* not? And if they *did* thus regard them, then ought *we* thus to regard them, and the controversy is ended.

In the language of Christ, "Go ye therefore and teach *all nations, baptizing them*"—there is

no specification of adult or infants. The latter are an *integral* and important *part* of all nations.

Query No. 3. Would the apostles, without the least intimation from the Saviour of any such purpose, *exclude the infants*—an integral part of all nations—from *baptism*, and hence from the *Church*? These facts are clear:—

(a.) *All infants of believers* were made members of the Church, by positive divine authority, at the time of its organization.

(b.) They had ever *remained* in the Church as members, until Christ directed his apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.

(c.) Christ gave no intimation of a purpose to *exclude* them.

(d.) *The strong Jewish prejudices* of the apostles, in which they had received a life-long education, were *against all change* in Church matters, unless by express and specific instruction from the Saviour. And even when they had such instruction, their tenacious adherence to the old paths often caused them to misinterpret the plainest words he could utter. This fact is illustrated all through the New Testament history. It prevented the disciples from comprehending his teaching respecting the necessity



of his death ; the meaning of the resurrection of the dead ; the nature of his kingdom ; the divine purpose of extending the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant to the Gentiles. It was this which led to the narrowest interpretation (rather *misinterpretation*) of one of the most defined utterances that ever came into form by human lips : "Go, disciple *all nations*, baptizing them." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*."

They supposed they were to "preach the Gospel to every" *Jewish* "creature," only, among "all nations," until, confronted by repeated miracle and unanswerable fact, Peter and his associate apostles were convinced of their error. See Acts x and xi.

(e.) When the apostles received the commission to "disciple all nations, baptizing them," they had *never seen* or *known* such a thing as the *infants of believers* being *excluded from the Church* in all their lives.

(f.) They had always seen the *infants* of persons proselyted to the Jewish religion received *into the Church with their parents*, and they were received *by baptism*. On this point, Mr. Wall, (the correctness of whose testimony no one will question,) says : "Whenever Gentiles were pros-



elyted to the Jewish religion, they were initiated by circumcision, the offering of sacrifice, and *baptism*; they were *all baptized*, males and females, adults and *infants*."

With these significant facts in the mind, let us now turn to the *language of invitation* which the apostles extended to the *first persons ever urged to receive Christian baptism*. It was soon after they received the commission to baptize "all nations." It is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, (ii, 38, 39,) as follows: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For *the promise is unto you, and to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Here the apostles remind their hearers of "the promise;" that it was unto *them* and to *their children*, and urged them to receive baptism on the ground of such promise. Did their adult hearers receive baptism, while their *infant children were excluded*? Such a supposition is not only out of harmony with "the promise," by virtue of which they were urged to receive baptism, but is in conflict with all the observation of the apostles on the subject, who

had always seen parents who were proselyted to the same Church of God in which they were now receiving new accessions of members, received with their *infant children*, who, with those parents, received *baptism*.

What authority had the apostles to introduce so *marked a change* in the constituent membership of the Church without the slightest intimation of the will of God on the subject? None whatever. Those who can believe they *did make such a change* are capable of believing without evidence.

God had put all infants of believers into the Church. He had never put them out, nor intimated any purpose of having them put out ; therefore they rightfully remain in the same Church.

It may be said that "the promise" to which Peter referred (Acts ii, 39) was that recorded by Joel, (ii, 28, 29,) of the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh ; upon old men and young men ; sons and daughters, servants and handmaids. It may be so ; but it should be remembered that the "promise of the Father" recorded by Joel was made in harmony with, and by virtue of, the original promise to Abraham and "his seed," in confirmation of which the infant "seed" were required to receive the rite of ini-

tiation into the visible Church. The promise by Joel is only a rehearsal of that of the covenant with the patriarch; and Peter's reference to it is the first thrill of its echo, sounding down through the Christian ages. How euphonious in its accents: "Unto *thee* and to *thy seed*." "Unto *you* and *your children*."

Alexander Campbell says, (Campbell and Rice's Debate, p. 413 :) "*The Jews practiced both circumcision and baptism in their families during the apostolic age.*"

True; but would Mr. Campbell have us understand that they discriminated giving baptism to their *adults*, and circumcision to their *infants*? Did they not rather baptize the same class that they circumcised? If they did *not*, then *why* not? They had always enjoyed the privilege of having their infant children with them in Church fellowship; are they now going to drop them without a solitary syllable of instruction to that effect from the Saviour or his apostles? How unnatural such a course; how preposterous is such a conclusion! Are the privileges of these charter-members of the Church, in emerging from a typical and shadowy dispensation into its latter-day glory, to be *curtailed* rather than *enlarged*?

3. *Household Baptisms.*

(1.) Acts xvi, 15. "*She was baptized, and her household.*" Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, hearing the apostle preach, was converted and baptized. We can find no other believer in that family, and yet "*her household was baptized.*"

(2.) Acts xvi, 33. "*And was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*" The jail keeper at Philippi and his *family* were baptized immediately upon *his conversion*. Though "*all his*" were baptized, there is no record of the *faith* of any other person but that of the jailer.

(3.) 1 Corinthians i, 16. "*I baptized also the household of Stephanas.*" Neither Paul nor Luke, his historian, tells how many infants there were in these families ; but,

(a.) Of the *nine* recorded cases of Christian baptism by the apostles, *three*—a third of them—were *household* baptisms.

(b.) There were probably as many infants in *these* three families as there would be in three *others*, selected at random in these communities.

(c.) During the more than sixty years of the apostles' ministry, we have no account of the baptism of an *adult* person, who had been

brought up by Christian parents, or in a Christian family. A fact rather remarkable, if, in the apostolic age, Christians did *not* have their infant children baptized. But it would be easily accounted for, and inevitable, on the hypothesis that their infants received the ordinance. In an anti-Pedobaptist community such a thing could never occur, where persons were converted to the Christian religion.

## CHAPTER V.

HISTORICAL TESTIMONY ; OR, THE TESTIMONY  
OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS.

BEFORE introducing any evidence from the testimony of the Fathers of the practice of the Church of the early ages respecting the baptism of infants, I desire to call the reader's attention to a few facts which have a somewhat important bearing on the subject.

1. The ancient usage of infant baptism in the Church subsequent to the apostolic age would not, in and of itself, either obligate or authorize its continuance. For such authority we must go to the Bible. But if the teachings of Scripture, though not absolutely decisive on the point, are nevertheless of such a character as to lead us to consider it obligatory, and the testimony of the Fathers shows that it was the universal and undisputed practice of the Church from the time of the apostles for several centuries, the proof is almost overwhelming that the apostles authorized the practice ; and it would



be useless to deny, and impossible to disprove, its apostolic authority. These, I maintain, are the facts in regard to infant baptism.

2. Not long after the apostolic age the Church quite generally fell into that heresy of the ages, *baptismal regeneration*, and introduced many unwarranted and strange ceremonies in connection with the administration of the ordinance. But these things do not in the least invalidate their testimony in regard to the *fact of infant baptism* as practiced among them, nor in regard to the universal *belief of the Church* that the practice was sanctioned by the apostles, and was, therefore, of divine institution.

3. The following facts and testimony are condensed from *Wall's "History of Infant Baptism,"* which is deservedly regarded by all parties as entirely accurate, and the most thorough account of infant baptism that has ever been given. He is said to have written with remarkable candor, impartiality, and ability. The following note, showing the estimate formed by competent judges of his history, is taken from the "*Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Wall,*" as cited in Dr. Hibbard's excellent work on "Infant Baptism," p. 186 :—"On February 9, 1705, the clergy

of England, assembled in general convention, 'ordered, that the thanks of this house be given to Mr. Wall, Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, for the learned and excellent book he has lately written concerning infant baptism, and that a committee be appointed to acquaint him of the same.' Dr. Atterbury, a leading member of said convention, says, 'that the History of "Infant Baptism" was a book for which the author deserves the thanks, not of the English clergy alone, but of all Churches.' Mr. Whiston, also a very learned man, well acquainted with the writings of the fathers of the first four centuries, and a professed Baptist, in his address to the people of that denomination, declares to them 'that Dr. Wall's "History of Infant Baptism," as to facts, appeared to him most accurately done, and might be depended on by the Baptists themselves.' The fact is, Wall's work on Infant Baptism, in *four octavo volumes*, is the crowning effort on that subject, and universally acknowledged as the *standard*.

§ 1. *The Testimony of Justin Martyr.*

"We also, who by him have had access to God, have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, which Enoch, and

those like him, observed. And we have received it by baptism, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners: and it is enjoined upon all persons to receive it in the same way."

Again: "Many persons among us, of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were *discipled* (*εμαθητεύθησαν*) to Christ in their childhood, (*εκ παιδῶν*), do continue uncorrupted."

Again: "We are circumcised by baptism, with Christ's circumcision."

This, first of the learned divines after the apostolic age, flourished A. D. 140. He wrote a dialogue against the Jews, which he held at Ephesus with Tryphon, the most distinguished of that people at the time, in which he maintained that *baptism* came in the place of *circumcision*, and upon this ground he vindicated the Christians in their neglect of that Jewish rite. The first and third of the above extracts are from this dialogue. The other is from his celebrated Apology in behalf of all Christians, and in defense of their religion, addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, the Senate, and all the Roman people.

1. He says to Tryphon, "We have *not received* this *carnal* circumcision." Why? Because we have received "the spiritual circum-

cision . . . by baptism. . . . We are *circumcised by baptism*, with *Christ's* circumcision." Then he must regard baptism as supplying the *place* of circumcision. But circumcision was given, generally, only to *infants*; and if *baptism* be *not* given to infants, it certainly could not come instead of that ordinance, nor in any proper sense supply its place; for, in that case, neither circumcision nor baptism would be given to the infants of Gentile Christians; and if they lived not to adult age, they would receive neither the Jewish nor the Christian ordinance.

2. "*We have received it*" (spiritual circumcision) "*by baptism, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners.*" The fathers believed that *adults* and *infants* were alike depraved—"sinners." It was a prominent point in their creed, also, that *baptism* was the prime agency, the Heaven-appointed means for the removal of all sin, original and actual. With the correctness or incorrectness of this doctrine we have nothing to do; but, of the fact of their believing and teaching it, no one at all acquainted with their writings will question. No point in their system was more fully developed, or more universally received. *Ambrose* says of the pagan

Gentile washings : “ *They cannot be baptisms.* The body is washed ; *sin is not washed away.*” Again : “ He who is *baptized* is . . . *cleansed.*” *Gregory Nazianzen* : “ Let us be baptized ; let us partake of the purifying water, more purging than hyssop, more purifying than that of the law, more sanctifying than the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean.” *Ferome* : “ I will pour out the *clean* water of *saving baptism.*” *Origen* : “ It is only the baptism of blood which can make us more *pure* than the *baptism of water* made us.” *Cyprian* : “ It is necessary that the water be first purified and sanctified, . . . that it may be able by its own *baptism* to *wipe off the sins of the baptized man.*” And because infants were as truly *depraved* as adults, they held that they needed *baptism* as truly. *Augustine* says : “ The whole Church has of old constantly held that baptized infants do obtain *remission of original sin by the baptism of Christ.*” *Celestius* : “ We acknowledge infants ought to be baptized for the *remission of sins*, according to the rule of the universal Church ”

And when *Fustin Martyr*, only about forty years after the death of the Apostle John, holding that infants and adults are alike *depraved*, says, “ We have received it ” (spiritual circum-



cision, regeneration) "by *baptism because we were SINNERS*," he assigns as a *reason for baptism*, that which requires its application to *infants* as truly and indispensably as to adults.

3. Justin, by the use of the term "Christ's circumcision," that is, *Christian* circumcision, very aptly indicates that baptism succeeds to circumcision. If so, its application *now* must be to the same subjects (infants) as in the former dispensation.

4. In his "Apology" to the emperor: "Many persons among us, of *sixty or seventy years old*, of both sexes, were *discipled* to Christ in their childhood," etc. He uses the same verb (μαθητεύω, *disciple*) that Christ uses in Matt. xxviii, 19, "Go *disciple* (English Version, *teach*) all nations, baptizing them." This indicates that the "persons" were *made disciples by baptism*. And if in Justin's time they were "sixty or seventy years old," they must have been thus made disciples when they were *little* children, (ἐκ παιδῶν,) some *twenty or thirty* years before the death of St. John, perhaps by the hands of some of the apostles. Let any person whose mind is free from prejudice calmly consider this fact, and ask himself whether infant baptism had had not the sanction of the apostles.



§ 2. *The Testimony of Irenæus.*

“As he was a Master, he had also the age of a Master. Not disdaining, nor going in a way above, human nature, nor breaking in his own person the law which he had set for mankind, but sanctifying every several age by the likeness that it has to him: for he came to save all persons by himself: all, I mean, who by him are REGENERATED (or baptized) *unto God, INFANTS and LITTLE ONES, and children and youths, and elder persons.* Therefore, he went through the several ages; for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants; to little ones he was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age, and also giving them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness.”—*Wall's Hist. of Baptism*, vol. i, p. 72.

The testimony of this father is exceedingly important, for he was in circumstances to know what was the practice of the early Church upon the subject under discussion. He was made bishop of the Church at Lyons, in Gaul, about A. D. 178; but he was born in Asia Minor, thirty years or less after the death of the Apostle St. John; and being converted in his youth, and educated in part by Polycarp, the cele-

brated bishop of Smyrna, he became a close and intimate friend of that apostolic father, who was a disciple and friend of St. John. Irenæus, in his old age, speaking of Polycarp, says: "I remember the things that were done then better than I do those of later times, so that I could describe the place where he sat, and his going out and coming in, his manner of life, his features, his discourse to the people concerning the conversation he had had with John, and others that had seen our Lord; how he rehearsed their discourses, and what he had heard them that were eye-witnesses of the word of life say of our Lord, and of his miracles and doctrine: all agreeable to the Scriptures."

Such was the close proximity of Irenæus to the apostles, that his preceptor conversed freely with him, as with one of them.

1. The value of the testimony of Irenæus depends upon a single expression, namely, REGENERATED UNTO GOD. Mr. Wall asserts (and no authority is more reliable) that he used this expression to signify *baptism*. If so, his testimony is unmistakably in favor of infant baptism, for Christ, he says, came to save all, "who by him are *regenerated unto God*, (or baptized,) *infants and little ones*."

Dr. Hibbard says : " The Christian fathers often used the word *regeneration* as synonymous with or as including *baptism*. . . . It was a common mode of speaking of baptism, and we are authorized, therefore, to take the testimony of Irenæus in the case as positive."—*Infant Baptism*, p. 188.

Mr. A. Campbell says : " In my debate with Mr. Walker and Mr. M'Calla, I objected to the substitution of the word *regenerated* for *immersed* in the extract from IRENÆUS and other of the ' primitive fathers,' as they are called, on the ground of their not being exactly representatives of the same idea universally. I admitted that sometimes they used the word *regenerated* for *baptized*, but not always ; and, indeed, not at all, *in the popular sense* of *regenerated*. Well, now it comes to pass, that I represent ALL the primitive fathers as using the term *regenerated* as equivalent to the term *baptized*. All this is true ; and what then ? Why, at that time I used the word *regenerated* as expressive of a *spiritual change*, and found that those fathers spoke of a *spiritual change* as well as we. I could not, therefore, reconcile this to the exclusive application of the term *regenerated* to the act of immersion ; *but on a more accurate and strict examination of their writings, and of the use of this*

*term in the New Testament, I AM ASSURED that they used the term regenerated as equivalent to immersion, and spoke of the spiritual change under other terms and modes of speech.*"—*Millennial Harbinger.*

2. It is important to notice that this Father speaks of infant baptism, *not* as an innovation, a novelty recently introduced ; nor does he speak merely of his own opinion respecting it ; but as a practice universally understood and admitted : as a doctrine of the Church concerning which there was no dispute nor doubt. The manner of his introducing it shows that he considered it as much a known and admitted truth as adult baptism—"He came to save all persons who by him are regenerated unto God : infants, and little children, and youth, and elder persons."

3. If the practice of infant baptism was not apostolic, but a novelty introduced after the apostles' days, it must have been introduced during the time of either Irenæus or of Polycarp, the latter of whom was for nearly twenty years contemporary with the Apostle John. But it is *absolutely* INCREDIBLE that such an innovation could have obtained so universally, without such opposition as would have made its record upon

the pages of history. Especially would Irenæus himself have spoken of it, who wrote "a great work in five books *against the heresies; a confutation of all the Gnostics*, and a defense of the Catholic faith against most of the heretics of that age." "The book," says Dr. Murdock, "contains much information respecting the early heretics, their opinions, sentiments, and characters; also respecting the state of theological science in that age, the doctrines generally received and taught, and the manner of stating and defending them." — *Murdock's Mosheim*, Cen. II, Part II, chap. ii, n. 5.

There is certainly, NO *ground* for *believing* that *infant baptism*, to which Irenæus makes reference in the phrase, "Regenerated unto God," was a *post-apostolic innovation*. And Dr. Rice well remarks: "The indirect, yet clear testimony of Irenæus, so near to the Apostle John, goes very far indeed to prove, not only that it was generally practiced, but that it was of divine authority." — *Debate with Campbell*, p. 389.

### § 3. *The Testimony of Tertullian.*

This first of the Latin Fathers was born A.D. 160. He was contemporary, therefore, for more



than forty years, with Irenæus ; was made presbyter of Carthage in Africa, A. D. 192 ; and flourished, as a writer, about the close of the second century. " He was a man," says Jerome, " of eager and violent temper." He was also of irregular principles and habits and morose disposition ; and was subject to great inconsistency, as is illustrated by the fact that after writing "*A Confutation of all Heresies*," he, in after life, embraced and zealously defended *Montanism*, the wildest of them all.

" Which were the greatest," says Dr. Mosheim, " his excellences or his defects, it is difficult to say. He possessed great genius ; but he was wild and unchastened. His piety was active and fervent, but likewise gloomy and austere. He had much learning and knowledge, but lacked discretion and judgment ; he was more acute than solid." He had imbibed the notion (prevalent at that time) that baptism swept away all sin, both original and practical ; and held that sin committed *after baptism* was *especially dangerous*, as there was no other means for its removal.

I write these things that the reader may the better understand and appreciate his testimony.



He says : “ But they whose duty it is to administer baptism, are to know that it is not to be given rashly. ‘ Give to every one that asketh thee,’ has its proper subject, and relates to almsgiving ; but that command rather is here to be considered, ‘ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine :’ and that (command,) ‘ Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partakers of other men’s faults.’ . . . Therefore, according to every one’s condition and disposition, and also their age, *the DELAYING of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of* LITTLE CHILDREN. For what need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger ? because they may either fail of their promises by death, or they may be mistaken by a child’s proving of a wicked disposition. Our Lord says, indeed, ‘ Do not forbid them to come to me.’ Therefore, let them come when they are grown up ; let them come when they understand ; when they are instructed whither it is they come ; let them be made Christians when they know Christ. What need *their guiltless age* make such haste to the forgiveness of sin ? Men will proceed more warily in worldly things ; and he that should not have earthly goods committed to him, yet shall

he have heavenly? Let them know how to desire the salvation, that you may appear to have given to one that asketh. "For *no less reason, unmarried persons* ought to be *kept off*, who are likely to come into temptation, as well as those that were never married, upon the account of their coming to ripeness, as those in wisdomhood, for the miss of their partner: until they either marry or be confirmed in continence. They that understand the weight of baptism will rather *dread the receiving it* than the delaying of it."—*Wall*, vol. i, pp. 93, 94.

1. Anti-Pedobaptists have brought all their batteries to bear against the testimony of Tertullian. They tell us, 1. That we have no proof to the contrary, that the children mentioned by him were *grown to years of understanding*. Mr. Campbell says, ("Debate with Rice," p. 422,) "No man can tell whether he meant *babes* or boys."

As though the Father had not said, "*Little children*." As though he had not spoken of "*godfathers*," a class of officials used at the baptism of none but *infants*. As though he had not written, "Let them come *when they are grown up*, when they *come to understand*, when they *know Christ*." As though he had said

nothing about "*their guiltless age.*" O, shame on such recklessness of *assertion!* It is very cheap in some quarters; but it gives as little credit for the intelligence of its readers as for the probity of its author. 2. They tell us that "*Tertullian*" "*opposed infant baptism;*" as if he had hinted even that it was *unscriptural*, or without *apostolic sanction*; and as if, forsooth, they had not already argued that they were *not infants proper* of which he was speaking, but grown "*boys.*" Mr. Campbell says, ("Debate with Rice," p. 422,) "*Tertullian opposed it*" (infant baptism) . . . "*as I affirm.*"

2. If, as anti-Pedobaptists affirm, Tertullian "*opposed*" infant baptism, that fact is the best proof possible that it was prevalent at the time; and he speaks of it as a well-known and general practice, as much so as that of "unmarried persons," "those that were never married," and "those in widowhood." But he advises "*the delaying of it.*" Such reference to the practice proves it to have been instituted long before.

3. He did not oppose infant baptism *as such*; as a practice that was *wrong in itself*: had he done so, he would, as every one must know, have declared it *unscriptural*; as not having *apostolic sanction*: as an *innovation*, or as *contrary to the*

faith and practice of the Church. But he makes no such plea in support of his *novel opinion*, never before met with in the history of the Church, that "*the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children.*" He does endeavor to defend his peculiar position with arguments ; what *are* they ?

"The godfathers" will be "brought into danger, because they may fail of their promises by death," or the children may prove "of a wicked disposition." "They that understand the *weight* of baptism will rather *dread* the receiving it than the delaying of it." Here is a *hint* at the real reason for proposing to "delay" the ordinance. "The *weight* of baptism, and the *dread* of receiving it," come from the false and superstitious notions, *first*, that *baptism washes away all sins* ; and *second*, that sins committed *after* baptism are especially to be "dreaded" for want of means for their removal, since baptism must not be repeated. For the same reason he advises the delay of the baptism of "unmarried persons." Mark what he says : "FOR NO LESS REASON," (than for the delaying of *infant* baptism,) "*unmarried persons ought to be kept off.*" Here he affirms that there is AS MUCH REASON for delaying the baptism of "*unmarried*

*persons,*" as there is for delaying the baptism of *infants*: but this could not be affirmed, unless the baptism of infants was believed to rest upon the *same divine authority*. Therefore, *Tertullian represents that the baptism of infants is of* DIVINE AUTHORITY.

4. The universal belief of the doctrine and prevalence of the practice of infant baptism, without the slightest breath of opposition in the Church, spread over most of Europe, Eastern Asia, and Northern and Eastern Africa, within a hundred years after the death of St. John, is a *remarkable fact*, which cannot be explained except upon the hypothesis of its *divine institution*. Unless it descended from the apostles with their sanction, it was an *innovation* by authority merely human. If so, *when* and *by whom* was it introduced? Both Irenæus and Tertullian, as we have seen, wrote an account of the rise and progress of probably every heresy known to the Church, and of every innovation which had ever been made; but neither they nor any other writer, so far as is known, for more than a thousand years after Christ, ever so much as hinted that infant baptism was an innovation, was not of God.

Between the time of the Father last named,



and the next, whose testimony it is proposed to notice, about A. D. 222, flourished *Hippolytus*, whom the learned Pressensé characterizes as the "Origen of the West," and says that his great work entitled *Philosophoumena* "is a vast repertory, reviewing all the doctrinal controversies of the Church from the earliest ages and most obscure beginnings of Gnosticism. Christian antiquity has left us no more valuable monument than the treatise 'On all the Heresies,' discovered a few years since among the dusty treasures of a convent of Mount Athos."—*Withrow on the Catacombs of Rome*, p. 393, note.

And yet, in all the writings of one so competent to the task, and living within one hundred and twenty-five years of the apostolic age, professedly commenting upon "*all the heresies*" and "*all the doctrinal controversies of the Church from the earliest ages and most obscure beginnings of*" error; not one syllable is said of infant baptism as a heresy, or innovation, or as producing a controversy in the Church! The legitimate and inevitable conclusion from these facts must be, that infant baptism was never a subject of *controversy* in the early ages, and was, therefore, of divine authority.



§ 4. *The Testimony of Origen.*

ORIGEN was born A. D. 185, in Egypt. His father was a martyr when the son was seventeen years old. He descended from a Christian ancestry, his grandfather and great-grandfather also having been Christians. He traveled extensively, and resided at several of the great church centers—Rome, Palestine, and Alexandria. He was the most learned of, and occupied the first rank among, the early fathers. In philosophy and general knowledge, and especially in the knowledge of sacred literature, he was deservedly the most celebrated man in the early Christian ages. Dr. Priestley says, "He was a man so remarkable for his piety, genius, and application, that he must be considered an honor to Christianity and to human nature." Dr. Mosheim calls him "a man truly great, and a luminary to the Christian world," and adds, "all should revere his virtues and his merits."

In one of his homilies on Leviticus he speaks as follows : "Hear David speaking : '*I was,*' says he, '*conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother*' bring me forth : showing that every soul that is born in the flesh is polluted with the filth of sin and iniquity ; and that, therefore, that was

said which we mentioned before, that *none is clear from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day.* Besides all this, let it be considered what is the reason that whereas *the baptism of the Church is given for the forgiveness of sins*, INFANTS ALSO ARE, BY THE USAGE OF THE CHURCH, BAPTIZED ; when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them."

Again, in a homily on Luke : " Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes frequent inquiries among the brethren. *Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins.* Of what sins ? or when have they sinned ? or how can any reason of the law in their case hold good, but according to that sense we mentioned even now—none are free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth ? And it is for that reason, *because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized.*"

Again, in his Commentary on Romans, he says : " For this, also, it was, that *the Church had from the apostles a tradition* (or order) *to give baptism even to infants.* For they to whom the divine mysteries were committed knew that

there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the Spirit; by reason of which the body itself is called the body of sin.”—*Wall*, vol. i, pp. 104–106.

What, now, is the *value of the testimony of Origen* in deciding the question under discussion? I feel free to say, that were all the other patristic writers entirely silent on the subject, and were there not a *hint* in all the records of uninspired history, *pro* or *con*, touching the subject, *his testimony alone* would warrant the ready conclusion and firm belief that infant baptism was the *universal practice of the Church from the apostolic age*. What are the facts in the case?

1. He was a man of *undoubted veracity*, as we are assured by contemporary and subsequent writers. “As his *doctrine*, so was his *life*; and as his *life*, so was his doctrine,” was an adage that many loved to rehearse in regard to him. See *Eusebius*, Book VI, chap. iii.

2. He had the *very best chance of knowing what he affirmed*. None among the ancient Fathers were more completely informed on all matters respecting the Church; whether in relation either to its history or its theology; its

belief or its practice ; concerning the present or the past. He was born only eighty-five years after the death of the last of the apostles. Some of his ancestors ("grandfathers and great-grandfathers," Rufinus calls them) were contemporary with, and probably acquainted and conversed with, some of the apostles. *He enjoyed the most direct and reliable tradition from the apostles through his OWN CHRISTIAN ANCESTRY.*

"The *doctrine* of Origen, and his Christian *instruction*, he derived from his ancestors." So says *Eusebius*. (Book vi, chap. xix.) The contiguity, therefore, of this Father, to the apostles, afforded him, to say the least, a good opportunity of knowing from uncorrupted tradition, as well as by other means, many things which the apostles did and taught.

3. *The writings containing his testimony* have come down to us without the least well-founded suspicion of any *interpolation* or *alteration* by which that testimony might be invalidated. It is, therefore, as reliable as any thing, received through translation, in the histories of the past ages. I am not unaware that Dr. Gale, an English Baptist of the last century, has opposed the admission of Origen's testimony, on the

ground of its coming through what he regards a faulty translation by Rufinus. But the endeavor of Dr. Gale to weaken the force of Origen's testimony, only illustrates the remark made above, that opposers of infant baptism had brought all their batteries to bear against the invincible fortress of truth presented by the Fathers on this subject. Dr. Wall has fully exposed the groundlessness of the exceptions taken by Dr. Gale to the admission of Origen's testimony, and has shown his unfairness in the attempt. Besides, the Homily on St. Luke, from which I have quoted, was translated by Jerome, "whose translation is allowed to be a faithful one."

4. His statements are *clear*; involved in no obscurity, ambiguity, technicality, or uncertainty. He says: "*Infants are, by the USAGE OF THE CHURCH, BAPTIZED.*"

Again: "*Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. . . . And it is for that reason, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that INFANTS ARE BAPTIZED.*"

Again: "*For this also it was, that THE CHURCH HAD FROM THE APOSTLES a tradition (or order) to give baptism even to INFANTS.*"



5. It remains to be observed that in all his discourses he speaks of the baptism of infants, not of set purpose, but only *incidentally*, on account of its connection (in the plan of redemption) with original or birth sin. "The pollution of our birth." As to this father's theology, that baptism washes away sin, original or practical, we have no controversy ; it was the error of the times, and was universal. But his statement of the fact, that *the Church, without a dissenting voice*, regarded infant baptism as truly of divine authority as *adult* baptism, is as unmistakable as the truth of the doctrine is unanswerable.

§ 5. *The Testimony of Cyprian.*

This learned prelate was made Bishop of Carthage, in Africa, A. D. 250, which position he held until he fell a martyr to Christianity, A. D. 258. He was noted for amiableness and spotlessness of character, and for piety and humility as well. Three years after his elevation to the bishopric he sat as president of a council of sixty-six bishops, in the city of Carthage, convened to consult upon matters relating to the doctrines and discipline of the Church, which council gave a most unanimous and outspoken testimony in regard to the universal



prevalence of infant baptism. One Fidus, a country bishop, not being present, sent a letter of inquiry as to whether, in case of necessity, *an infant might be baptized before the eighth day after its birth*; expressing an opinion that it ought not. The bishop presiding, and the council, replied to his letter as follows: "Cyprian, and the rest of the bishops who are present at the council, in number sixty-six, to Fidus, our brother, greeting: We read your letter, most esteemed brother, in which you write of one Victor, a priest, etc. . . . But to the case of infants: Whereas, you judge 'that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none shall be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born:' WE WERE ALL, IN OUR ASSEMBLY, OF A CONTRARY OPINION. For as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born. For, whereas our Lord, in his Gospel, says, 'The Son of man came not to destroy men's souls (or lives) but to save them;' as far as lies in us, no soul, if possible,

is to be lost. . . . So that we judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining grace by the law that is now appointed ; and that the spiritual circumcision (that is, *the grace of baptism*) ought not to be impeded by the circumcision that was according to the flesh, (that is, Jewish circumcision,) but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ ; since Peter, speaking in the Acts of the Apostles, says, 'The Lord has shown me that no person is to be called common or unclean.'

"If any thing could be an obstacle to persons against their obtaining the grace, the adults, and grown, and aged, would be rather hindered by their more grievous sins. If, then, the greatest offenders, and those that have grievously sinned against God before, have, when they afterward come to believe, forgiveness of their sins, and no person is prohibited from baptism and grace ; how much less reason is there to refuse an infant, who, being newly born, has no sin, save that he descended from Adam according to the flesh, he has from his very birth contracted the contagion of the death anciently threatened ; who comes for this reason more easily to receive forgiveness of sins, because they

are not his own, but others' sins that are forgiven him.

"This, therefore, most esteemed brother, was our opinion in the assembly, that it is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind, and affectionate to all. Which rule, as it is to govern universally, so we think it more especially to be observed in reference to infants and persons newly born. To whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted, because by their weeping and wailing at their first entrance into the world, they do intimate nothing so much as that they implore compassion. Dearest brother, we wish you always good health." — *Cyprian's Epistle to Fidus*, as quoted by *Hibbard*, p. 197.

This is a very sensible epistle, full of the sweet spirit of the Master, and (if we except the fancied and false element in the premises—baptismal regeneration) its logic is faultless.

1. The statement that "no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace, by the law" (of baptism) "that is, *now*" (in the new dispensation) "appointed : and that the spiritual circumcision" (baptism) "ought not to be impeded by the circumcision that was according to the

flesh ;" shows conclusively the opinion of these sixty-seven bishops, that *baptism superseded circumcision*, and for this reason, as well as others, should be given to the same class of subjects.

2. The inquiry of Fidus was not whether *infants should be baptized* ; that was *not a question* : but whether "the rule of circumcision was not to be observed, so that none should be baptized *before the eighth day after he is born.*"

3. The unanimous decision of the council that baptism is to be "*denied to no person that is BORN,*" demonstrates undeniably the universal practice of baptizing infants ; especially as the orthodoxy of their decision was never called in question, so far as history shows, by any man or set of men, Catholic or heretic. The dioceses of these bishops must have spread over a good portion of the territory occupied by the African Church ; and their occupants were certainly in condition to know what was the sentiment and practice of the Church universal respecting infant baptism, not only, but, "it is quite clear," says Dr. Hibbard, "they were amply competent to decide whether that practice was according to the apostles' doctrine and usage."

Cyprian, born about A.D. 200, (according to Hale and Wheeler,) was fifty-three years of age when called to preside in this council of bishops. In that assembly were men probably from ten to twenty years, at least, older than himself. If so, they were born within eighty or ninety years of the apostolic age. Some of their grandfathers, and nearly all of their great-grandfathers, were living at the time of the apostles, and had personal knowledge of the doctrines and usage of the primitive Churches.

The members of that Carthaginian council were all men of extensive information in Church matters, and thoroughly posted in the history of its doctrines and usages. They were thoroughly conversant, also, with the current apostolic tradition, gushing fresh and pure from its fountain head. In view of *these pregnant facts*, it is believed *they could not have been ignorant* of the practice and teaching of the apostles touching a subject of interest so absorbing and universal as was that of infant baptism. In Milner's "Church History," (Cen. iii, chap. xiii, as cited by Hibbard,) we have the following upon this first council of Carthage: "Here is an assembly of sixty-six pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who have stood the fiery



trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known, and who have tested their love to the Lord Jesus Christ in a more striking manner than any anti-Pedobaptists have had an opportunity of doing in our days ; and if we may judge of their religious views by those of Cyprian—and they were all in perpetual harmony with him—they were not wanting in any fundamental of godliness. No man in any age more revered the Scriptures, and made more copious use of them on all occasions, than he did ; and, it must be confessed, in the very best manner. For he uses them continually for PRACTICE, not for OSTENTATION ; for USE, not for VICTORY in argument. Before this holy assembly a question is brought—not whether infants should be baptized at all, none contradicted this—but whether it is right to baptize them immediately, or on the eighth day ? Without a single negative, they all determine to baptize them immediately. This transaction passed in the year A. D. 253. Let the reader consider : If infant baptism had been an innovation, it must have been one of a considerable standing. The disputes concerning Easter, and other very uninteresting points, show that SUCH an innovation must have formed a remarkable era in the Church.



“The number of heresies and divisions had been very great. Among them all, such a deviation from apostolic practice as this must have been remarked. To me it appears impossible to account for this state of things but on the footing that it had EVER been allowed, and therefore that it was the custom of the first Church.”

§ 6. *The Testimony of Gregory Nazianzen.*

This Father was son of a bishop of the same name, and was born in the province of Cappadocia, in Asia Minor, about A. D. 320. He was one of the most learned men of the age in which he lived. Having commenced his studies at Cesarea in Cappadocia, he continued them at Cesarea in Palestine, and at Alexandria, and completed his preparatory course at Athens, after a term of five years in the last named place. Here he was fellow-student, of equal prominence and promise, with Basil the Great, the intimacy of whose friendship he enjoyed ever after ; and with Julian the Apostate, upon whom, at the time of his death, he composed two invectives.

Gregory was made successively bishop of Sasima, Nazianzus, and Constantinople ; and,

on account of his unrivaled eloquence and great popularity, the General Council of Constantino-ple and the Emperor *Theodosius* constrained him to accept the patriarchal chair of that metrop-olis. But his preference for retired life caused him to seek seclusion, in which he engaged him-self in the composition of Christian literature to the end of his days.

His testimony in favor of infant baptism is ample and clear, but our limits will allow of only a small portion of it. In common with the men of his time he imbibed thoroughly the superstition—more or less prevalent in portions of the Church in all ages—that *baptism cleanses from all sins, original and practical*. But he was alarmed at the inevitable outgrowth of so fundamental an error, namely, the increasing practice of delaying baptism from year to year. It was becoming quite common for persons to remain in the state of catechumens (a sort of probation, in which baptism was not given) until just before death, and then receive bap-tism and be admitted into the Church.

“The practice,” says Dr. Hibbard, “which had now received the example of the Emperor Constantine, had . . . grown out of a supersti-tious notion of the saving efficacy of baptism.

They considered that it removed all previous guilt; and, as the ordinance could not be repeated, and as they feared they might stain the purity of their baptism afterward if they baptized in early life, they were easily betrayed into the habit of deferring it. This exact view it is important to remember, and against it Gregory levels the artillery of his argument and the polished shafts of his eloquence. He reminds them of the danger of losing baptism by sudden death; that such procrastination is often a mere pretext for living longer in carnal pleasures; that it is a wily stratagem of the devil to cheat souls, which he calls upon them to resist."

In a set discourse on baptism, this Greek Father says, "Art thou a youth? fight against pleasures and passions with this auxiliary strength: list thyself in God's army. Art thou old? let thy gray hairs hasten thee. Strengthen thy age with baptism. . . . Hast thou an infant child? let no wickedness have the advantage of time; let him be sanctified from his infancy. Let him be dedicated from his cradle in the Spirit. Thou, as a faint-hearted mother, and of little faith, art afraid of giving him the seal, (that is, baptism,) because of the weakness of nature. Hannah, before

Samuel was born, consecrated him, and brought him up from the first in a priestly garment, not fearing on account of human infirmities, but trusting in God. Thou hast no need of amulets or charms. . . . Give to him the Trinity, that great and excellent preservative."

Again: "Some of them (those who neglect baptism) live like beasts, and regard not baptism. Some have a value for baptism, but delay the receiving it, either out of negligence, or a greediness longer to enjoy their lusts. But some others have it not in their own power to receive it, either because of their *infancy*, perhaps, or by reason of some accident utterly involuntary. . . . And I think of the first sort, (that is, those who despise baptism,) that they shall be punished, as for their other wickedness so for their slighting of baptism. And that the second shall be punished, but in a less degree, because they are guilty of their own missing it, but rather through folly than malice. But that the last sort, (those who omit baptism involuntarily, as infants,) will neither be glorified nor punished by the last judge; as being without the *seal*, (that is, baptism,) but not through their own wickedness; and as having *suffered* the loss rather than occasioned it.

“We must, therefore, make it our utmost care that we do not miss the common grace,” etc. “Some may say, suppose this to hold in the case of those who can desire baptism : what say you to those that are as yet infants, and are not in capacity to be sensible, either of the grace or the want of it? Shall we baptize them, too? Yes, by all means, if any danger make it requisite. For it is better that they be sanctified without their own sense of it, than that they should be *unsealed* and uninitiated. *And our reason for this is circumcision, which was performed on the eighth day, and was a typical seal, and was practiced on those who had no use of reason.*

“As for others, I give my opinion that they should stay three years, or thereabouts, when they are able to hear and answer some of the holy words ; and though they do not perfectly understand them, yet they form them : *and that you then sanctify them in soul and body with the great sacrament of consecration.*

“For though they are not liable to give account of their life before their reason be come to maturity, yet by reason of those sudden and unexpected assaults of dangers that are by no means to be prevented, it is by all means advisa-

ble that they be secured by the laver of baptism."

A few brief remarks upon these lengthy quotations will suffice. 1. The unvaried and undisputed belief of the age in which Gregory lived, that baptism was *the divinely appointed and sole agency* by which the guilt and stains of sin could be removed, was indeed a grave error, and doubtless had its effect to impair the purity, vitality, and the efficiency of the Church: but that fact does not in the least invalidate their testimony that infant baptism was held by all to rest upon the authority of inspiration, and to have received the sanction of the apostles.

2. The fact of the tendency of the times to defer infant baptism did not in the least imply want of faith in its divine authority, for there was the same tendency to defer *adult* baptism; and, as already explained, for the same reason. It did not argue, therefore, against infant baptism, *as such*, any more than against *adult* baptism. Gregory, who gives it as his opinion that "they should *stay three years, or thereabouts*, when they are able to hear and answer some of the holy words, though they do not perfectly understand them," urges their *immediate* baptism, "by all means, if any danger make it requisite."



3. Tertullian and Gregory Nazianzen were the only persons for more than a thousand years after Christ that mentioned the delay of infant baptism at all ; the former till the age of reason, and, in case of adults, till relieved from exposure to special temptation ; and the latter, as above stated, till about three years. But Tertullian, as well as Gregory, would give baptism *immediately* where there was danger of death, as is set forth in his speeches.

As it is the purpose to give only a specimen of the testimony of the early Fathers on the subject of this chapter, I shall be compelled to pass unnoticed that of *Clement*, presbyter of the Church and president of the Divinity School at Alexandria ; of *Basil the Great*, bishop of Cesarea, in Cappadocia ; of *Optatus*, bishop of Melevi, in Numidia ; of *Ambrose*, bishop of Milan ; of *Chrysostom*, bishop of Constantinople, and of others who have spoken out distinctly upon the subject, and come down to those of later years.

#### § 7. *The Testimony of Augustine.*

The fame of *Augustine*, or *St. Austin*, as he is called, has spread throughout the world. He possessed a superior genius, a constant love of

truth, patience in its pursuit, and undoubted piety. He debated with, and wrote much against, different classes of heretics, and wrote a history of all the heresies. He exerted a great and extensive influence in the Church, and did much to shape the theological views of his time. In a treatise of his against the Donatists, we have the following: "So that many persons, increasing in knowledge after their baptism, *and especially those who have been baptized either when they were infants, or when they were youths*, as their understanding is cleared and enlightened, and their 'inward man renewed day by day,' do themselves deride, and with abhorrence and confession abjure, the former opinions which they had of God, when they were imposed on by their own imaginations. And yet they are *not therefore accounted either not to have received baptism, or to have a baptism of the same nature of their error*. But in their case, both the *validity of the sacrament is acknowledged*, and the vanity of their own understanding rectified."

Again: "And as the thief, who by necessity went without baptism, was saved; because by his piety he had it spiritually: so, where baptism is had, though the party by necessity go with-

out that (faith) which the thief had, yet he is saved : *which, being handed down to them, the universal Church holds, with respect to infants who are baptized* : who certainly cannot yet believe with a heart to righteousness, or confess with the mouth to salvation, as the thief could ; nay, by their crying and noise, while the sacrament is being administered, they disturb the holy mysteries ; and yet *no Christian will say they are baptized to no purpose.*

“ *And if any one do ask for divine authority in this matter, though that which the universal Church practices, which has not been instituted by councils, but has always been observed, is most justly believed to be nothing else than a thing delivered (or handed down) by the authority of the apostles* : yet we may, besides, take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants by the circumcision which God’s former people received.

“ Therefore, as in Abraham the righteousness of faith went before, and circumcision, the seal of righteousness of faith, came after ; so in Cornelius, (the centurion,) the spiritual sanctification by the gift of the Holy Spirit went before, and the sacrament of regeneration by the laver of baptism came after. And as in Isaac, who was

circumcised the eighth day, the seal of the righteousness of faith went before, and (as he was follower of his father's faith) the righteousness itself, the seal whereof had gone before in his infancy, came after ; so in infants baptized, the sacrament of regeneration goes before, and (if they put in practice the Christian religion) conversion of the heart, the mystery whereof went before in their body, comes after. And as in the thief's case, (alluding to the thief upon the cross with our Saviour,) what was wanting of the sacrament of baptism the mercy of the Almighty made up, because it was not out of pride or contempt, but of necessity, that it was wanting ; so in infants that die after they are baptized, it is to be believed that the same grace of the Almighty does make up that defect that, by reason not of a wicked will, but of want of age, they can neither believe with the heart to righteousness, nor confess with the mouth unto salvation. So that when others answer for them, that they may have this sacrament given them, it is valid for their consecration, because they cannot answer for themselves. But if for one that is able to answer for himself, another should answer, it would not be valid.

“By all which it appears that the sacrament of baptism is one thing, and conversion of the heart another ; but that the salvation of a person is completed by both of them. And if one of these be wanting, we are not to think that it follows that the other is wanting ; since one may be without the other in an infant, and the other without that in the thief : God Almighty making up, both in one and the other case, that which was not willfully wanting. But when either of these is willfully wanting, it involves the individual in guilt.”

Again, in his comment on Genesis : “*Yet the custom of our mother, the Church, in baptizing infants, is by no means to be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be other than a tradition of the apostles.*”

In reply to a letter of eighteen Pelagian bishops addressed to Augustine, he says : “But this I say, that the original sin is so plain by the Scriptures, and that it is forgiven to infants in the laver of regeneration is so confirmed by the ANTIQUITY and AUTHORITY of the Catholic faith, SO NOTORIOUS *by the PRACTICE of the CHURCH*, that whatsoever is disputed, inquired, or affirmed of the origin of the soul, if it be contrary to this, cannot be true.”



In some of his books treating on original sin, he says : "The whole Church has of old constantly held that baptized infants do obtain remission of original sin, by the baptism of Christ. For my part, I do not remember that I ever heard any other thing from any Christians that received the Old and New Testaments, *neither from such as were in the Catholic Church, nor yet from such as belonged to any sect or schism.* I do not remember that I ever read otherwise in any writer that I could find treating of these matters, that followed the canonical Scriptures, or did mean, or did pretend, so to do."

1. It will be seen from these extracts, first, that infant baptism was the uninterrupted and undisputed faith and practice of the entire Church. Augustine says : "No CHRISTIAN *will say that they*" (infants) "*are baptized to no purpose.*"

2. They were as firmly settled in the conviction, also, that the practice was of *divine institution*, and descended from the apostles. Hear him : "If any one do ask for *divine authority*" for infant baptism, "which the *universal Church practices*," let him know it "has *not been instituted by councils*, but has ALWAYS *been observed*," and "*is most justly believed to be noth-*



*ing else than a thing delivered by the authority of the apostles."*

3. We meet again with the view held by all the fathers, that *baptism succeeds to, and supplies the office of*, (so far as rites differing so much in form can supply the place of,) *circumcision*. "We may, besides, take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of *baptism* does avail infants, by the *circumcision* which God's former people received."

4. The use of the phrase, "*laver of regeneration*," as synonymous with *baptism*, indicates the sense (so common with the fathers) in which *Fustin Martyr*, only forty years after the death of St. John, made use of the same word (regeneration) in application to "childhood," *ἐκπαίδωο* ; and the affirmation of *Augustine*, only two hundred and sixty years later, that "original sin is forgiven to infants in the laver of regeneration," and that it is "confirmed by the ANTIQUITY and authority of the Catholic faith, so notorious by the practice of the Church," places that "antiquity" very *near* indeed, if it does not extend it *into the time* of the apostles.

5. When we remember that no man living in the day of *Augustine* was probably better versed in the doctrines and history of the Church

than he was; and that he wrote the history of "all the sects and opinions" that were known to have arisen in the Christian world down to his time, making *eighty-eight* heresies in all: the statement that he had NEVER HEARD OF OR READ OF any Christians, either of the general Church, or of any sect or schism, who had not constantly held that baptized infants do obtain remission of original sin by the baptism of Christ, places the evidence of the divine authorization of infant baptism completely beyond all reasonable dispute.

§ 8. *The Testimony of Pelagius and Celestius.*

"Pelagius and Celestius," says *Mosheim*, "the former a Briton and the latter an Irishman, both monks living at Rome, and in high reputation for their virtue and piety, conceived that the doctrines of Christians concerning the innate depravity of man, and the necessity of internal divine grace, in order to the illumination and renovation of the soul, tended to discourage human efforts, and were a great impediment to the progress of holiness, and, of course, ought to be rooted out of the Church. . . . In the year 410, on account of the invasion of the Goths, they retired from Rome, and going first to

Sicily, and thence to Africa, they more openly advanced their opinions. From Africa, *Pelagius* went to Egypt ; but *Celestius* continued at Carthage, and solicited a place among the presbyters of that city. But his novel opinions being detected, he was condemned in a council at Carthage, A.D. 412."

From this time *Augustine*, now the famous Bishop of Hippo, began to assail with his pen the doctrines of Pelagius and Celestius, "and to him," says *Mosheim*, "chiefly belongs the praise of suppressing the sect at its very birth."

It was during this controversy that infant baptism was subjected to the severest criticisms that were ever brought to bear upon this dogma of the Church. Its *antiquity*, *scriptural authority*, and *utility*, were submitted to the closest scrutiny, as these were points upon which the controversy largely depended. Pelagius and Celestius had affirmed that *infants newly born are in the same state of moral purity that Adam was before he fell* ; while their opponents maintained that they were the subjects of *innate depravity*.

"As Pelagius and Celestius denied original sin," says Dr. Hibbard, "it would seem that they would, of course, deny the necessity of in-

infant baptism, for all the Christian world believed that baptism was 'for the remission of sins.' Infants, indeed, were not supposed to have any actual sin, but yet there was that liability to punishment, that unfitness for heaven, that, without the atonement of Christ, is an inseparable property of our nature, and this the ancient Christian Church held was removed by, or at, baptism. A denial of the doctrine of innate depravity, therefore, appeared to carry with it, necessarily, a denial of the fitness and obligation of infant baptism. And so it did. Accordingly the great spirits in the Church who opposed Pelagius ceased not to press him with this argument, 'If infants are without fault in their nature, as you affirm, why, then, are they baptized?' Now, any person can at once perceive how it became the interest of Pelagius to invalidate the practice and obligation of infant baptism if he could. He never met with a more difficult and troublesome argument, in all the circle of this famous and furious controversy, which shook and menaced the Church in Asia, Africa, and Europe, than this simple one with which he was constantly beset.

"In vain did he attempt to shelter himself from the charge of denying the utility and obli-

gation of infant baptism, by holding that infants needed baptism, not for the remission of any guilt, which he denied their having, but in order to fit them for the kingdom of heaven. In vain, I say, did he urge this distinction. He was met with the argument, 'If infants need baptism they are *unfit* for heaven, which would argue their sinfulness.' 'As for infants that die without baptism,' says Pelagius, 'I know whither they do not go; but whither they do go I know not; that is, I know that they do not go to the kingdom of heaven; but what becomes of them I know not.'

"But why this difficulty—this hard labor with the argument? Why not cut the knot at once, by denying infant baptism? by pointing out its want of scriptural authority, and by demonstrating the fact that it had crept into the Church in an evil hour, under the auspices of ambitious and corrupt men? Let those who deny infant baptism reply to these questions."—*Infant Baptism*, pp. 215, 216.

The subject of the Pelagian controversy is thus introduced in order that the testimony about to be cited may be the better comprehended, and its value estimated in its bearing upon the subject in discussion.



*Pelagius*, in a letter to the Bishop of Rome, says: "Men do slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants;" and declares that he "never heard even an impious heretic who would affirm this concerning infants;" (that is, that baptism was to be denied them,) and says further: "For who is so ignorant of the reading of the evangelists, as to attempt, (not to say to establish, this doctrine, but) to speak of it heedlessly, or even have such a thought? In fine, who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and cause them to miss of the kingdom of heaven; since our Saviour has said, that none can enter into the kingdom of heaven that is not born again of water and the Holy Spirit? Who is there so impious as to refuse to an infant, of what age soever, the common redemption of mankind, and to hinder him that is born to an uncertain life from being born again to an everlasting and certain one?"

1. The reader will see that in all antiquity there was the *profoundest* conviction that infant baptism was *not* an innovation, resting upon authority merely human; but that it was of *divine institution*. What an almost omnipotent leverage of power it would have placed in



the hands of Pelagius, could he have denied its divine authorship: which he could have done by showing that it had its origin subsequent to the time of the apostles. He wrote the letter above cited to Innocent, Bishop of Rome, only 317 years after the apostles; and if infant baptism had originated in the fruitful imagination of some doctor of philosophy, or doctor of divinity, and had been palmed off upon the Christian world as an apostolic institution, Pelagius certainly had the means of knowing it. For he traveled much, and resided in many of the great Church centers of the world.

The whole Christian world indorsed the tenet of the Constantinopolitan creed: "*We acknowledge* ONE BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS." But he denied that *infants had any sin*, and defended the practice of their baptism upon other grounds. But infant baptism upon the basis of the purity of infant nature is simply absurd. Now, could he have *denied* infant baptism, by showing its lack of the essential requisite—*divine authority*—he would have spiked all the heaviest guns of the enemy, and turned their remaining batteries upon themselves. But, instead of this, he, nor any other person, ever showed or attempted to show the lack of

divine authority for the practice, (a fact in the argument perfectly overwhelming,) from the time of Christ to more than a thousand years afterward. He says, he "*never heard even an impious heretic who would affirm this ;*" that is, that they were *not to be baptized*.

The testimony of *Celestius* is found in the following: "*But we acknowledge infants ought to be baptized for the remission of sins, ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, and ACCORDING TO THE SENTENCE OF THE GOSPEL, because our Lord has ordained that the kingdom of heaven shall be bestowed upon no person except he be baptized;* which, as men do not receive it by nature, it is necessary to confer by the power (or liberty) of grace."

1. The testimony of *Celestius* accords with that of all antiquity, that infant baptism was "the rule of the universal Church," though his admission that infants ought to be baptized *for the remission of sins* illy agrees with his denial of their depravity.

2. It will be noticed that *Celestius* and *Pelagius* both declare they never heard of any person who *denied* infant baptism. On this fact Mr. Wall, as cited by Hibbard, has the following: "If there had been any such Church of

anti-Pedobaptists in the world, these men could not have missed an opportunity of hearing of them, being so great travelers as they were. For they were born and bred, one in Britain, the other in Ireland. They lived the prime of their age (a very long time, as St. Austin testifies) at Rome—a place to which all the people of the world had then a resort.

“They were both for some time at Carthage, in Africa. Then the one (Pelagius) settled at Jerusalem, and the other (Celestius) traveled through all the noted Greek and Eastern Churches in Europe and Asia. It is impossible there should have been any Church that had any singular practice in this matter, but they must have heard of them. So that one may fairly conclude that there was not at this time, nor in the memory of the men of this time, any Christian society that denied baptism to infants.

“This cuts off at once all the pretenses which some anti-Pedobaptists would raise from certain probabilities that the Novatians, or Donatists, or the British Churches of these times, or any other whom Pelagius must needs have known, did deny it.”—*Infant Baptism*, part i, chap. xix, sec. 36.

§ 9. *The Testimony of Ferome and the Fifth Council of Carthage.*

*St. Ferome* says to *Pelagius*: "This one thing I will say, that this discourse may at last have an end. Either you must set forth a new creed, and after the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, baptize infants into the kingdom of heaven: or else, if you acknowledge one baptism for infants and for grown persons, you must own that infants are to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins."

In this extract the allusion to infant baptism is purely *incidental*; but it shows the conviction of its divine authority to have been *profound* and *universal*.

The following is the decision of *The Fifth Council of Carthage*, which was held about A. D. 415, as expressed in its *sixth canon*, touching the baptism of those who were supposed to have been baptized in infancy, but of whose baptism there was no positive witness. I cite this action of the council because it not only shows the universal practice upon the subject under discussion, but exhibits also the received doctrine of the Church respecting all doubtful cases:—

"It is resolved concerning infants of whose having been baptized there are no positive wit-

nesses that can give certain evidence, and they themselves are not capable of giving any account of that sacrament having been administered to them, by reason of their age ; that such be, without any scruple, baptized."

A sensible and sound decision ! If there be no *positive proof* of the baptism of any person who wishes to serve God and get to heaven ; then let him be baptized, and "without any scruple." But let not any person or sect presume to give the Christian ordinance to any who have already received it, whether in infancy or at any other time ! Such is *second*, or *re-baptism*, and rests upon *no divine authority*.

§ 10. *Statements and Conclusion.*

All parties admit that from the time of *Augustine*, who died A. D. 430, down to the twelfth century, there was known to appear no sect or person to oppose infant baptism. It is, therefore, not necessary to quote additional testimony to confirm a fact so well established.

An incident cited by Hibbard from Wall (part ii, chap. ii, sec. 2) will illustrate the universal prevalence of the practice in those medieval ages. "Cassander, who wrote in the

twelfth century against the novel heresy that had sprung up, and had been propagated by Peter Bruis, who denied infant baptism, aggravates the charge of novelty by stating that if infant baptism were only a mock baptism, as Bruis alleged, then, 'as all France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, and all Europe, has had never a person baptized now for three hundred or almost five hundred years, otherwise than in infancy, it has had never a Christian in it.'"

It is evident that, from the earliest mention of infant baptism by the patristic writers, the entire Christian world practiced it without any such controversy as would imply the least doubt in regard to its divine authority, (and this, I think, is generally admitted by all parties,) until the time of the Petrobrusians, (a sect called from Peter Bruis, in the Province of Dauphiny in France,) A. D. 1128. The Petrobrusians were the first body of men that ever denied infant baptism. And they seemed to have survived not more than *thirty years*, when they entirely disappeared; from which time until the rise of the German anti-Pedobaptists there is no account of any sect, party, or person, which denied or questioned the divine authority for the practice.



The following is an epitomized statement of the leading facts in the history of infant baptism, embodying conclusions founded upon long and thorough examination of the subject by Dr. Wall, than whom there is no higher authority. And they are hereby commended to the careful attention of the reader :—

“ Lastly, as these evidences are for the first four hundred years, in which there appears one man, Tertullian, that advised the delay of infant baptism in some cases ; and one, Gregory, that did, perhaps, practice such delay in the case of his children, but no society of men so thinking, or so practicing ; and no man saying it was unlawful to baptize infants : so, in the next seven hundred years there is not so much as one man to be found that either spoke for, or practiced, any such delay. But all on the contrary. And when, about the year 1130, one sect among the Albigenses declared against the baptizing of infants, *as being incapable of salvation*, the main body of that people rejected their opinions, and they of them that held that opinion quickly dwindled away and disappeared, there being no more heard of holding that tenet till the rising of the German anti-Pedobaptists, A. D. 1522.”  
— *Wall*, vol. ii, chap. x, p. 501.

The foregoing presentation of the case, it is believed, will amply justify the following Conclusions :—

1. It is certain that infant baptism was not a *debated subject* in the apostolic or primitive times. No man appears to have questioned its divine authorization until the twelfth century after Christ. There was *not a word* of controversy upon the subject, so far as history shows, until the time of Peter Broussier, A. D. 1128.

2. This state of things could not possibly have existed, unless it had been either *universally* PRACTICED or *universally* IGNORED, from the time of Christ down to the time in which the early Fathers made undoubted reference to it.

3. It could not possibly have been *universally* IGNORED from the time of Christ, to the time these Fathers thus referred to it ; being observed by them without objection, and then have found its way into recognition and practice by all classes of professed Christians, by the time of Origen, A. D. 230 : unless the ever vigilant and faithful pen of history had taken cognizance of it as an *unwarranted* INNOVATION.

4. But history has NOT thus recognized it.

Not less than *six* of the Christian Fathers, namely, *Irenæus*, A. D. 178; *Hippolytus*, 222; *Epiphanius*, 370; *Philastrius*, 380; who, according to Mosheim, “traveled nearly all over the Roman Empire, combating and endeavoring to convert, errorists of every sort;” *Augustine*, 428, and *Theodoret*, 430, (besides *Tertullian* and others who wrote less extensively upon the subject,) wrote each the history of all the sects, schisms, and heresies that were known to have existed from the days of Simon Magus down to their times; describing minutely, and with a careful hand, the rise, progress, and final issue, so far as known, of every erratic theological opinion and anti-Christian practice.

*But they have nowhere mentioned* INFANT BAPTISM *except as* DIVINELY INSTITUTED *and* UNIVERSALLY RECEIVED.

It therefore comes down to us indorsed with an amount and quality of historical evidence that places its apostolic sanction completely beyond all reasonable dispute. And, though we find in the Scriptures its most substantial and decisive support, so that were every syllable of testimony outside of the Bible destroyed, it would still rest on a firm foundation;

yet it is gratifying to trace the clear current of historical testimony from its inspired source down to ages and mark the sweep of its flow, as it bears to us the *hallowed assurance that* INFANT BAPTISM IS OF GOD.

THE END.



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